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The Historic Christ  
In the Faith of To-day



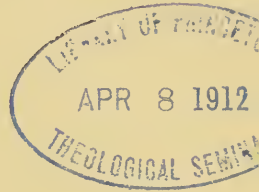
# The Historic Christ

IN

## The Faith of To-day

BY

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INTRODUCTION  
THE FAITH BEHIND THE GOSPELS





## INTRODUCTION

### THE FAITH BEHIND THE GOSPELS

I. ONE of the elements of modern religious life to be greatly prized is a widespread desire to learn all that can be known of Jesus of Nazareth. Every attempt to meet this need of a reliable representation of the facts about Jesus must be based upon prolonged criticism of the historical sources, combined with recurrent contemplation of His Person. The Gospels must be appraised, or they will never be appreciated. Evasion of free inquiry, either on the pretext of the sanctity of the books or the majesty of their subject, excites a corrosive suspicion that the history cannot be trustworthy. Even now an opinion is abroad that we cannot be sure of the truth of the Gospels; and with it mingles an impatience at endless, abstruse inquiries which lead nowhere. From all sorts and conditions of men there comes a loud demand for frankness from competent scholars. While there can be only a limited number of men intellectually equipped for dealing with the recondite problems arising out of the Synoptical and Johannine literature, there is a growing multitude who feel themselves held by the soul's quest for Jesus Christ. The following study, therefore, aims at showing how one of the multitude who seek for this supremely important knowledge, having been guided by an honest, earnest impressionism, has gained the satisfaction of a reconstructed conception of the world's greatest, most loving and Divine Teacher. Jesus is no spent force; He is still luring men forward by His gracious, strong personality. The rigorous criticism to which the Gospels have been subjected has resulted in a vindication of their substantial historicity. Phœnixlike a new thought of Jesus rises from the fires of criticism, and we see this indestructible Person more clearly than any generation since the time of the Apostles. How He lived and died, what He believed and taught, can be discovered with greater certainty and lucidity by reason of the work done by scholars and critics.

2. It should never be forgotten that the objective of all study of the New Testament is to see Jesus and to reproduce His image for others. The peril of all historical research, however, is that the goal may be forgotten through the interests inherent in the processes. The beauty and perfection of living things are seen best, not in the laboratory, but in the open air. They who desire to get the best out of the Gospels must cultivate this open-air mood—an attitude at once impressionable and responsive. If the present can be explained only through the past, the past can be understood only by the present. Knowledge of human nature today is the guide for every student of the past. Even in the tasks of criticism, some of the instruments of research must be sought outside the library; gifts of sympathy, imagination, and knowledge of affairs are as necessary as scholarship for the treatment of the Gospels. Critical results are often errant and crude because the humanness of the story has been neglected, and the evangelists have been regarded as types and personifications of theological tendencies. There are difficulties, uncertainties, obscurities and discrepancies in the Gospels: these, however, may be over-emphasized; for it must be admitted that, if such defects were all cleared away, the impression Jesus has made upon the minds of men would not be materially modified. Some difficulties there are, which inhere in the naturalistic bias of the inquirer, rather than in the subject itself. After scholarship and criticism have been given freest exercise, a spiritual reconstruction of the materials is necessary; and for this the student must be qualified by a certain moral affinity with Jesus Himself. We deprecate no criticism of the Gospels, however ruthless; but we deem contemplation of Christ as equally necessary in every attempt to discover Him afresh. And for this task which has been laid upon our age, all thoughtful persons are qualified in part; for the character depicted in the Gospels embodies the Ideal which is latent in the constitution of human reason. The fuller our knowledge of Jesus Christ becomes, the more does it appear that He answers objectively and historically to that moral idealism which exists in embryo in every intelligence.

3. One of the defects charged against the Gospels is their subjectivity. They give us, it is said, men's thoughts and feelings about Christ rather than a trustworthy photograph of Him. It is true, Jesus can be seen only as He was mirrored in other minds;

and the tone and colour of those minds affect their representations of Him. But all written history must plead guilty of this characteristic of subjectivity; the most scientific historians can but write as they think and feel. Such anthropomorphism is inextricably bound up with all knowledge. The logic of modern Pyrrhonism undermines all science before it completes the circle and passes over into dogmatism. The admission that the Gospels were produced in harmony with the laws of human thought may be made ungrudgingly; the authors, whoever they were, could but give us their reflection of the Master. We read but once of His writing, and that was in the dust; the only authorship He aimed at was of "living epistles"—the changed characters of men. And at first the disciples seem to have cherished no design of writing about Him; they cannot be thought of as contemporary diarists or literary artists; they were not reporters. So far as they were concerned, the Gospels were an afterthought. The glorified Christ of the Apostles was not only the antecedent, but also the *raison d'être* of the Gospels. It was the faith authoritatively expressed in the Epistles that made the writing of the Gospels a necessity; it became an obligation upon the Church to recount the facts which created the apostolic faith; and in their turn those later writings became the noblest *apologia* for the Apostles' Creed. The remarkable propaganda that followed the Crucifixion created the spiritual atmosphere in which alone the Gospels could be produced. It is worthy of note that, in an incredibly short time, the Apostles passed from cowardice to invincible courage, from despondency to triumphant faith. They boldly ascribed to Jesus a heavenly or ideal preëxistence, teaching that He had passed from a heavenly state into human history through the gate of birth; that, after a period of preparation and humiliation, He offered Himself as a sacrifice, and finally rising from the dead ascended into Heaven, where, from the throne of Divine Power, He pursues a mediatorial ministry as Redeemer. We do not recapitulate these beliefs in any dogmatic manner; our purpose is historical—to review the primitive faith that inspired the writing of the Gospels. Of this faith Harnack writes: "On the one hand, it was so simple that it could be summed up in a few brief sentences, and understood in a single crisis of the inner life. On the other hand, it was so versatile and rich that it vivified all thought and stimulated every emotion."<sup>1</sup> To this

<sup>1</sup> *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, Moffatt's trans.

it must be added that the first Christians also believed that Christ Jesus would shortly return in apocalyptic splendour; that, in preparation for this consummation, the glorified Christ was calling men to be heirs of salvation, and by dwelling within their spirits He was constituting them into an *ecclesia*. This faith could not be dissolved by philosophic speculation; it became the root of a new social-ethic, which is "both individualistic and socialistic." Its two watchwords were *repentance* and *faith*, signifying man's detachment from the "world" and his attachment to God. Further, the rule and pattern of the Christian life consisted, for the most part, in apostolic remembrances of the conduct and teaching of Jesus. It is an historic fact that the propaganda of this new faith resulted in the regeneration of a great part of the human race. The realization of these movements of the Spirit of Jesus gave birth to the impulse to collect, sift and edit all authentic memories of the wondrous ministry that lay behind these phenomena.

4. To those who are accustomed to set the "simple Gospels" in contrast with the dogmatic teachings of the Epistles, it will seem paradoxical to attribute a formative influence upon the Gospels to St. Paul: yet, while the passing fashion of thought may depreciate the spiritual value of the Pauline writings and deprecate their masterful influence upon the Church, history affirms that this gifted and earnest apostle was the first to present the faith in Jesus as a Universal Religion. St. Paul's exposition of the mind of Christ and of the world-wide significance of Redemption made the Gospels necessary, and we cannot but wish that he had been one of the Twelve. His epistles are often described as scholastic and theological, remote in theme and treatment from the personal piety of Jesus. A brief summary of St. Paul's allusions to Christ, however, acts as a corrective of this misapprehension, and shows that he was not indifferent to the actual history of Jesus. The twenty years that elapsed between the reputed Resurrection and the beginning of the literary activity that created the New Testament were abridged by an ardent evangelism based upon the facts of Christ's ministry. In order to illustrate the relationship of the Epistles to the Gospels, we may select the letter to the Galatians, which, by reason of its dogmatic and controversial character, forms an antithesis to the lucid, sublime simplicity of the Synoptics. This



Pauline tract on Christian Liberty presupposes a generation of evangelical activity, while it represents the new problems of a subsequent age (53 A.D.); in its record of St. Paul's visit to Jerusalem, it carries us up the stream to within five years of Christ's Crucifixion (34 A.D.), and relates how the Apostle had personal intercourse with James, Cephas and John. These three men carried in their memories the fullest knowledge of the Ministry of Jesus. The facts of those three memorable years had been burnt into their lives, and could not be erased in half a decade; the acts, words and looks of the Master were still fresh in their minds, and as they conversed with St. Paul their reminiscences formed their theme and matter. This little concrete fact of the Apostle's experience imparts great cogency and convincingness to every allusion he makes in his letters to the historic Jesus.

5. While Jewish, Greek and Latin influences beat in upon the new religion, and helped to fashion its external form, there was at the heart of it a primitive deposit of apostolic memories of Jesus which constituted its central, living cell. The environment explains nothing until assumption is made of the presence of a mysterious life-force. At the heart of the Primitive Church there wrought the faith in Jesus—a new dynamic, effectual alike as an ethic and as a pure theosophy. A few examples culled from the great authentic writings of St. Paul will justify this postulate. The address to the community “in God,” in the earliest epistle to the Thessalonians (*c.* 51 A.D.) arrests our attention by its remarkable coördination of the name of Jesus with the name of the Father. That a strict Jew should collocate these names without fear of infringing the rigorous monotheism of his race—and he a writer of great dialectical skill and speculative insight—is a phenomenon that attests the boundless influence of Jesus. Had some Greek author associated Jesus with the Deity, our surprise would have been less; but that this erudite Jew, who had learnt of the Man of Nazareth from the Galilean fishermen, should not shrink from linking with the Godhead One who, a few years before, had been crucified as a malefactor—this, indeed, is an astonishing tribute to the greatness of Jesus. Further, it is evident that the Apostle did not leave his converts at Thessalonica without adequate instruction concerning the Man whom he ranks with God: he writes to them as persons fully

conversant with the Divine pattern given by Jesus, and as those who wait for the Son of the living and real God from Heaven, "whom He raised from the dead, Jesus our rescuer from the wrath to come." And since St. Paul also quotes "a word of the Lord" (iv. 17) for confirmation of his own teaching about the second advent, it may be inferred that he was acquainted with the disciples' accounts of the *logia* of Jesus. Between the epistles to the Thessalonians and the great classic letters addressed to Galatia and Rome, there is no doctrinal discrepancy. "God appointed us not to wrath, but to possess salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live along with Him." It is relevant to our purpose to note that the ethical echoes of Jesus in the Pauline epistles are both numerous and important, although to trace them here would take us too far afield. When the Apostle exhorts his readers to "stand firm and hold to the traditions that you have been taught by word or by letter from us," there is reason to suppose that the body of apostolic teaching referred to was constituted by the accepted accounts of Jesus Christ.

6. Since it is of great importance that the gap between the close of Christ's early ministry and the writing of the Gospels be filled, we may pass from the traces of St. Paul's knowledge of the traditions and the "law of Christ" back to the crisis of the Apostle's inner life when the Lord from Heaven subdued his fierce enmity and laid upon him the obligation to be a missionary. Lord Lyttleton affirmed that the "conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, is of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation." The latest calculation of this event supposes it to have happened within six or seven years of the Crucifixion, but probably it ought to be placed within eighteen months of that event; and it is worthy of note that so great an authority as Harnack places it in the same year as the Crucifixion. This general recognition of the early date of St. Paul's conversion gives added weight to what is said as to the substantial trustworthiness of apostolic traditions about the Ministry of Jesus. But our emphasis is now to fall upon the historic fact that Jesus absolutely mastered the potent personality of St. Paul—that is to say, henceforth the Apostle exulted in being the bondslave of Christ Jesus. So absolute became the sway of Christ over St. Paul's

mind, that his very life was merged in the experiences of Jesus: the Apostle claimed to have died with Christ, to have been raised with Him; and out of this mystical subjugation emerged a will of tremendous force, an intellectual greatness of the highest type, and a rare spiritual enthusiasm. By his own confession, we learn that the mainspring of his thought, emotion and activity was Christ in him. The mind of St. Paul became the mirror of Jesus Christ. The ground of the Apostle's appeal to the Corinthians "was the gentleness and forbearance of Christ"; the formula of adjuration used by him was, "As the truth of Christ is in me." He strove to be loyal in intellect and heart to Christ Jesus while he boldly assayed the great task of interpreting the mind of his Lord to the Greek-speaking world. This apostle emancipated the infant church from sectarian and national limitations; he discerned and preached the universality of Christ. The suspicion that St. Paul diverted the stream of Christianity, and changed a simple ethic into a supernatural gnosis, is not borne out by the Gospels. If it is true that the Church has been dominated by Paulinism, it is likewise true that the mind of St. Paul can only be explained through the Historic Christ. The modern representation of the teachings of Jesus and Paul as antagonistic is false. The Gospels themselves were fashioned under the influence of the Apostolic Faith; but Paulinism was created by the facts which are recorded in the Gospels. While the Epistles come first as literature, the Gospels possess historical priority. The writers of the New Testament wrote with their eyes fastened upon Jesus. They occupied different points of view; they brought varied qualifications to their task, and yet, from their twenty-seven books, there emerges one, vital, consistent representation of Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God.





BOOK I  
THE DAYS OF THE PREPARATION



## CHAPTER I

### THE PRESUPPOSED IDEAL OF THE GOSPELS

I. THERE can be no authentic biography of Jesus; the materials for writing it do not exist. The Gospels, however historic, do not attempt to give us scientific history; they are transparently dogmatic, written to justify and propagate an Ideal of Jesus which constituted the inmost cell of the Christian Church and the protoplasm of a new theology. The prosaic disciples of Jesus did not despise history, but they treated the external history of their Master as the shell of a Divine Revelation; the bare facts of the ministry of Christ were of value in their eyes simply because they shadowed forth the personality of their Lord. If the suspicion hovers over our minds that the modern conception of Jesus is the product of philosophic speculation and romanticism, we shall fail utterly to appreciate the Gospels; for these writings of the first and second century are saturated with a lofty, catholic idealism which originated in the oral reports of Jesus. Those who adventure to set forth the origins of Christianity have to steer cautiously between the Scylla of an idealism which has no pragmatic base and the Charybdis of a naturalism which discredits all transcendence of the Spiritual. When we succeed in escaping in some measure the preconceptions and prejudices of our modern time, and turn with open, frank, discerning eyes to the Faith that lay behind the Gospels and the ideas diffused through their pages, a sentiment of wonder grows in our minds that the accumulated wealth of philosophy, poetry and history extending over nineteen centuries has not carried us one step higher than the Pauline and Johannine conception of Jesus Christ. There are scholars who suspect that this ideal is semi-mythical, and that it arose from the romantic exaggerations of hero-worship; they believe that, when historical criticism has swept away the *Aberglaube* and dogmatic incrustations and got down to the natural truth of the Gospels, there will remain only the figure of a good man, who has been strangely overrated. The worth of this judgement must be gauged at

the conclusion of a critical study of the Gospels; we make no valuation of it at this point. But we do protest against the method of adopting this suspicion at the beginning as a canon of criticism, and proceeding to cut down the Figure of Jesus to the proportions of an ordinary man. Whatever may be the final results of our studies in the life of Jesus, it is demanded of us to give an early recognition of the general Ideal of Jesus Christ which was the dogmatic presupposition and final cause of the entire New Testament. Even were this explicit acknowledgement of the dominating and formative influence of the Christ-ideal upon the Gospels to result in a lessened belief in their historicity, we should nevertheless be bound to make it, as for us it is the key of the New Testament. We do not, however, assent to the position that the presence of dogmatism in the minds of those who selected and propagated the accounts of Jesus' work undermines all historical reliability in the traditions transmitted through them.

2. One of the dangers of our age, both in industry and scholarship, is over-specialization and the corresponding loss of balance and proportion in the minds of men. Whether by an unconscious suppression of facts through mental preoccupation, or through absorption in certain aspects of the Gospels and the exclusion of others, the fair vision of the whole is often lost and the judgement relatively impaired. There is often more justice in naïve impressionism than in a partial criticism. In making an estimate of a character, a book, or a picture, attention to the whole ought to precede the special observation of parts; the *tout ensemble* must be apprehended before the value of details and special features can possibly be seen. The realm of music affords an illustration of this truth—a judgement based merely upon the ear's appreciation of passing sounds is of little worth; the true musician either possesses a prophetic intuition of the whole or acquires a first general impression of the work into which the phrases, movements and symphonies must be integrated. If he cannot hold all the parts together in his mind, he will be unable to judge them separately. This principle applies to the criticism of the Gospels; the parts must be viewed through the whole, and in its turn the view of the whole will be re-constituted by increased knowledge of all the parts. Now the attempt to gain a general impression of the whole scope of the

Gospels, brings us back upon the Christ-ideal which dominates them throughout; there are not four different and inconsistent Christs, but one Ideal created by the character of Jesus. This is the unifying conception of all the heterogeneous traditions that have been compiled by the four evangelists. The resultant unity of the general impression of Jesus is due neither to the collusion of the writers nor to the suppression of their individualities; and it does not depend upon the inerrancy of their records, nor upon any mechanical harmony or correspondence. It is possible to lose one's way amid the minutiae of modern research—to fail to see the wood because of the trees; but if we approach the Gospels with honest impressionism, although the diversities, discrepancies and graver defects of these books are known, yet the imagination is filled with the Figure of one great majestic Man. The broken lines and seams are as the leaded frame of a lattice window through which looks out upon us the calm, noble, wonderful face of Jesus. The simple faith of the uncritical multitudes all through the last nineteen centuries assures us of the resultant unity of the Gospels; there is no irreconcilable disagreement between St. Mark's realistic sketch of the Carpenter of Nazareth and St. Luke's gracious idealized portrait of the Lord and Saviour; between the Master depicted in the framework of Jewish Messianism by St. Matthew and the Son of God described by a fourth evangelist in the gentle radiance of the Logos philosophy.

3. That ruthless criticism, which reduces these four books to a tangle of uncertain traditions derived from obscure and unknown sources, only increases our wonder at this unified Ideal. An apprehension of the nature of this resultant unity of the Gospels—a preliminary contemplation of this idealized synthesis of all the records in the one Christ-character—orientates the mind to the apostolic point of view, and aids in an understanding of the purpose of these writings. Those who are so enamoured of the purely inductive method as to protest against this way of beginning our study of the Ministry of Jesus, should remember that not only must the novice always begin by a tentative acceptance of axioms and principles, but also that most discoveries and advances have been preceded by foreglances and anticipations of unities and ideals which to mere dry-as-dust pedants must have seemed poetic and fanciful. The seer an-

ticipates the goal which can only be attained afterwards by slow pedestrian efforts and much weariness. At the very beginning of New Testament research, it is necessary to reach a hand through the years and conceive some general idea of the whole. The constitutive value of this Christ-ideal is admirably illustrated by the testimony of a Christian convert in China, who stated that at first the doctrines of our religion had appeared to him as the outlines of vague dreams and cloudy shadows, but when once he gained a general knowledge of the Christ, every incident and detail of the Gospels fell into its place and became luminously intelligible. The Gospels must be judged by this Ideal, and, on the other hand, this Ideal must be continually corrected and amplified, and must grow in definiteness and acquire ever new wealth of content, by persistent investigation of the records of the Ministry of Jesus. This double play of the mind ought to find scope in all our studies of the Gospels and should help us in forming a fresh synthesis of all the parts. We call attention to this presupposed Ideal of the Gospels, not for dogmatic purposes, but that we may use it as a part of our *apparatus criticus* in the subsequent examination of the records of Christ's Ministry; and if in our course we should find this Ideal unverifiable, we shall not hesitate to abandon it.

4. The Christ-ideal, as the name itself implies, is a sublimation of the Jewish Messianic hope which through the centuries has assumed many protean forms. This idea that Jesus was the Messiah was the central cell and morphological unit of the apostolic faith; in St. Paul's language he was the Second Adam, a title justified by the claim of Jesus to be the Son of Man. History and faith are blended in this conception of Christ—the earthly history made the faith possible; but the Ideal could only have been fashioned by abstraction from mundane details, and a concentrated attention upon the inner life of Jesus. The belief in the Resurrection of Jesus gave the standpoint which made such faith-vision feasible. Such was the insight of the Apostles, that even while they used the traditions of Jesus' Ministry to illustrate their evangelic thesis, they virtually swept aside the mere accidents of time and place and seized upon the spiritual personality of Jesus as a veritable revelation of God. Ancient and modern speculation are at one in believing that living



beings disclose their true nature in the end of their development. The final cause, last in the order of time, is first in the order of Nature. The evolutionist of the twentieth century agrees with the Aristotelian principle that the true nature of a thing can be understood only when the development is ended. However interesting the beginnings may be, the real purpose of an organism must be sought in its fullest and maturest phase. He only can understand what was implicit in the beginning who has seen and felt what became explicit in the finished course. Thus, until we have stood at the Cross and beheld Jesus in death—nay, until we have pondered the mystery of His reputed Resurrection—we are not competent to judge of His birth. The experience of many a student of the Gospels is that the mind is forced to return again and again upon its own postulates and assumptions in order to modify them by its maturest cognitions. If one adopts a naturalistic standpoint, he is soon forced into the dilemma of abandoning either his own preconceptions or the Gospels.

5. The Christ-ideal is the revelation of the Perfect Man, after whom all races have instinctively inquired. Confucius had given the Chinese his conception of the Sage and the Princely Man, portraying the ideal harmonies of character: Plato had also described, with almost prophetic insight, the Good-Man and the fate which would befall him in a world such as ours; and in our own Elizabethan age the poet Spenser pierced to the heart of knight-errantry and set forth for his generation a type of fine English manhood, which, however, "with all that was admirable and attractive in it, had still much of boyish incompleteness and roughness. It had noble aims, it had generosity, it had loyalty, it had a very real reverence for purity and religion; but it was young in experience of a new world, it was wanting in self-mastery, it was often pedantic and self-conceited, it was an easier prey than it ought to have been to discreditable temptations."<sup>1</sup> We might enumerate other ideals which have been flung forth from the poetic and religious imagination; but they must be acknowledged to fall short of the length, breadth and depth of the Christ-ideal. The Son of Man embodies the complete consciousness of Perfect Manhood; this Ideal Brother identified Himself in all essential experience with His brethren;

<sup>1</sup> Dean Church, *Life of Spenser*.

He confessed ignorance of times and seasons; He evinced a transitory uncertainty of what the Father's will might be as He approached the hour of His tragedy in His final struggle with evil; He was tempted—tempted in all things, as we are; He resorted to prayer as His protection and inspiration; He remained without sin—innocent, holy and undefiled. There is neither narrowness nor looseness, neither pedantry nor imperfection in this Pattern Man; the Apostles described Him as the Second Adam and Representative of the human race, and as the Begetter of a new type of manhood in the world. St. Paul treated this Ideal as the formative principle of personal religion and the constitutive bond of the Christian Fellowship: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." As our minds master this Ideal, they are subdued by its inherent beauty and grandeur; they are drawn out of the vortex of animal impulse and passion, and transformed by an inward power of new life. Amid all uncertainties and mutations of thought, the Christ-ideal abides as the mind's permanent possession: it exists as a real fact in our world of thought; upon it the mind may build, as upon a rock, in the midst of the restless sea of speculation.

6. This Christ-ideal, however, cannot be attributed to the originating power of the human imagination; the Platonic idea of "the Good," embodying the essences of Beauty, Symmetry and Truth, sprang from the idealizing faculty in the poet-philosopher's mind; but the Second Adam, or Son of Man, is the Ideal of one who actually lived and wrought in our human world. Whatever influence the mythicizing tendency exerted in its formation, the Christ-ideal can never be looked upon as the pure product of legend. Some have supposed that, Athena-like, the Christ-ideal sprang fully armed from the brain of St. Paul; but such a suggestion is irrelevant to the facts of history. There is no sufficient hiatus left in the post-Crucifixion days to account for a mythical Christ; the history is too closely linked for any facile interpolation of a mere imagination, however splendid. We are not dealing with some pale, vague, bloodless creation of human fancy; for this presupposed Ideal of the Gospels is rooted in the soil of human history. In writing thus of the Christ-ideal we are neither yielding to the pressure of sentimental fancy nor indulging in the extravagant phantasies of history. Mere idealism has, again and again, proved its impo-



tence in the battlefield of life—ineffectual as a force levelled against the fierce passions; therefore the highest ideal to command our heart's allegiance must be based upon some historical realization. When Arthur's knights set out in quest of the Holy Grail, they unwittingly fought against the interests of their own order, and made it impossible to attain to the king's beneficent ideal. The inspiration of the Christ-ideal is of permanent potency because it is based on the faith that the Logos had been made flesh. In the account of St. Paul's heavenly vision the glorified Christ affirms, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." However imperceptible to our gross vision the subtle stages of transition through which the impression made by Jesus passed before it could be presented as the Ideal and climactic Revelation of God to man, we are assured that the actual historic Jesus gave the originating impulse to this faith, that the impression He made upon the hearts and minds of His intimate followers constituted its real nucleus. But, while a partial account of the rise of the Christ-ideal is the simple one that Jesus created it by His ministry in Galilee and Judea, to this we must add the frank recognition of an influential mingling of fact and opinion in the colouring medium and bias of the general mind of the Church. Such an admixture was inevitable, and must have begun at the first disciple's response to the call of Jesus; and when He was withdrawn, the memory of what He had been and the faith in a continuing relationship with Him in His glory wrought together in the matrix of apostolic thought. How much was due to historic fact and how much was contributed by subjective conditions, may not now be determinable; we but know that the Christ-ideal was rooted in facts of history, and that the oral tradition of the work and teaching of Jesus passed into Scripture before the glow and throb of actual life had died away. The Gospels visualize Jesus and place us in the maelstrom of antagonism in which He lived; we see the forces that overthrew Him, and were afterwards defeated by their own success. The idealization which necessarily followed the belief in His Resurrection has not so utterly transformed the historic reflection of the Person of Jesus as to make the Gospels unhistorical. The perspective was widened from the arena of Judaism to the theatre of the cosmos by St. Paul and St. John; but the central Figure is historic, and can be relied upon as a true delineation of the manner of life pursued by Jesus of

Nazareth. Instead of undermining the historicity of our Gospels, the criticism of the past fifty years has served to make their honesty, realism, and credibility more apparent than ever before.

7. Our identification of the Christ-ideal presupposed in the Gospels with the historic Jesus whose impression upon the disciples' minds was transmuted through an experience of His abiding influence, now leads us to inquire what it was in His ministry that prompted such idealization. The Christian religion was not produced in a vacuum by the isolated action of Jesus; enough has been said to show that the Christ-ideal sprang in part out of the reaction of other minds upon the impression of Jesus. Naturalism strives to account for Christianity by representing it as the confluence of many streams, attributing it to such varied conditions as the supremacy of the Roman Empire, the universal peace of that time, the general diffusion of Greek ideas and language, and the mingling of all the varied thoughts and influences of East and West. Historians recognize that it was the end of one age and the beginning of another; that the fulness of time had come. But all these intellectual forces—the *crisis* of East and West, the intermingling of the ethical ideas of Judaism, Greece and Rome, and the upspringing of the new humanity such as is betrayed by Virgil—fail to explain the rise of the Christian religion. There was needed the action of some mighty personality in history to fuse these forces into a living whole, and to fire the Ideal with enthusiasm for holiness. Such was the achievement of Jesus of Nazareth; He perfected the essential ideal of all religions; He focused and embodied the Light which lighteth every man; and, by so doing, He himself became the historic conscience of the race. Naturalism affirms that Jesus was the Child of His age, country and race; but when we examine the Ideal presupposed in the Gospels and the narratives they offer to verify that Ideal, we come face to face with an element of transcendence in His character. The impression He made cannot be treated as due to ordinary hero-worship; in order to fit Him into the procrustean frame of Naturalism, we must first eliminate some of the characteristic features of His self-consciousness. Having sought to measure the forces of heredity and race-culture together with the social, political and religious environment of Jesus, we are led to attribute to

Him a mastery and moral authority able to assimilate and mould these mingled influences to His own victorious Ego. There is no escape from this idea of transcendence in the character of Jesus, if we are to treat the Christ-ideal fairly; we are drawn into the vortex of mystery and confronted by the fact that Jesus made the impression He did upon the minds of the Apostles, in part at least, by His amazing egotism. Without involving ourselves prematurely in dogmatic definitions, we may acknowledge that one of the profoundest characteristics of Jesus was His consciousness of a filial relationship with God. It might have been imagined that the unique Divine Sonship belonged exclusively to the Christ-ideal and was due to the idealization which had gone on; but from the Gospels we learn that this was no posthumous title, since Jesus Himself was accused, during His earthly ministry, of saying: "I am the Son of God."<sup>1</sup> Even Keim accepts as authentic in St. Matthew the Johannine aerolite, "No Man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." And it remains a matter of historic fact that Jesus was condemned by the high-priest as worthy of death, because He made God His own Father. Such Divine consciousness as Jesus realized may have been due to the infusion of the Spirit of God into His soul in the experiences of His moral life—that is, we may ascribe to it an ethical rather than a metaphysical value; but we wish to point out, as most important in any consideration of the Christ-ideal, that the title of the Son of God was not the result of the disclosure of His real nature by the Resurrection; it was claimed repeatedly by Jesus in the days of His flesh.

8. The duality of this Christ-ideal is customarily described in the epithet, "The Divine Humanity of Jesus"—a characterization that has the merit of recognizing that Christ is at once the centre of both human and Divine relationship. The integrity of manhood was not impaired in Him, or He would cease to be the Pattern, or Archetypal Man. Although in the apostolic letters the standpoint of the Resurrection throws the emphasis necessarily upon the exalted form of this glorious Being, the reality of His previous historic and phenomenal existence is assumed: the humiliation preceded His *Analepsis*, or assumption into Glory. In the Gospels, the "likeness of sinful flesh"<sup>2</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 40-43.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 3.

His earthly state is accentuated in a manner which shows that He was born of a woman under the law and participated in our common human nature. His dissimilarity from us consisted in His complete subordination of all animal impulses to the higher life which we term the Spirit of God in Him. We fall and rise again; our very lapses make us feel the quenchless thirst after a higher type of moral life, but that of which we catch glimpses as an ideal and sinless plane of life is assumed to have been undeviatingly realized in the experience of Jesus. A yet greater emphasis falls upon the reality of the Divine Spirit in the Christ-ideal—"God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and marked out as Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness in consequence of His Resurrection from the dead."<sup>1</sup> That which constituted the higher nature of Jesus and made Him so uniquely the Son of God was the indwelling of the Spirit of God. The Resurrection itself is not understood to have constituted His right to be thought of as God's Son; but it was the disclosure of His nature that showed Him to be Divine. In His previous fleshly state, He was the Son of God in virtue of His perfect Character, but the glory of His nature was hidden. The Archetype and essential Ideal of manhood is perfectly embodied in Christ Jesus, and His differentiation from us is that He lived in fullest reciprocity with the Heavenly Father from His birth, while we seem to be born far from our nature and only attain unto a fluctuating realization of it after varying struggles. The modern problem is to give due recognition to the two factors in this dualistic ideal, and to formulate a rational conception of the process. Are we dealing with a successful instance of the apotheosis of a man, or with an incarnation of a God? Is it the humanizing of Deity, or the deification of Humanity? Is it a sonship by *adoption*, such as all believers are attaining unto, or of an eternal nature and right? The modernist tendency is toward simplification by getting rid of all dualism and identifying the humanity of Jesus with His divinity. Controversies about the two natures are out of touch with the present mood of speculation; Jesus is the Son of God because He is so truly the Son of Man. There is an inherent attractiveness in this conception of the deification of Jesus; it seems simpler; it makes prominent the identity between Jesus and other men; it brings

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 4.



an inspiration to all who receive the Sonship of grace; and is not to be ruled out as *ipso facto* impossible. Probably the metaphysical problem is utterly beyond the range of our thought, and it is well to lay stress on the ethical and religious phases of Christ's Person and their values. At the same time, we do justice to the apostolic Ideal only when we attribute to Christ a state of preëxistence with its concomitants of personal volition and choice; the New Testament is full of the idea of an incarnation rather than of the conception of deification; the *anaplerosis* which followed the Resurrection was preceded some thirty years previously by a process of *kenosis*, or self-emptying. It may yet be decided that the Pauline interpretation of the pre-existent Mind of Christ is a matter of purely speculative value, not possessing the value of Revelation; that it is a question for Christian philosophy to determine whether the preëxistent Christ was Ideal only, or a Personal Reality; but the matter of immediate importance and relevance is that Jesus made such an overwhelming impression upon His followers, that, though familiar with all the details of His ministry and the phenomena of His human nature, they came to believe that He had come from some higher sphere into our earthly history with a mission to reveal God and save man. For many minds the correct attitude toward this problem must honestly be agnostic; many others will hold that the matter is still *sub judice*; to others again, since pre-existence seems implied in the recorded claims of Jesus and was undoubtedly a feature of the apostolic Christ-ideal, the theme will seem closed to speculation and open only to faith. In order to begin our historical studies of the Gospels without hampering prejudices, it may be stated that the process of deification incurs all the difficulties attendant upon the dogma of the Incarnation: neither can be in harmony with the presuppositions of Naturalism; and whether true or not, the Pauline and Johannine conception of the Incarnation of a Divine Person is full of ethical and religious inspiration.

9. Whatever modifications may take place in the framework of Christian philosophy, the Christ-ideal will live on with the historic Jesus at its centre; for it is a value-judgement of supreme importance; it is pregnant with ethical inspirations in the personal piety of life; it is a formative principle in the growth of the Church, and it will play an important part in the reconstruction

of religious thought. We have termed it "the pre-supposed Ideal of the Gospels"; for it not only gives the standpoint whence the authors might compile their accounts of Jesus, but it is the thesis they set out to prove through the medium of history. We think that no merely human genius could have combined into one living whole the seemingly incongruous attributes and experiences narrated in the Gospels, but believe that the Ideal was so described in literature because it was first realized in Life. Not only is the character of the Divine-Humanity of Christ beyond invention so that it became the Ideal only by being a Fact, but it proves to be the light which gives unity to the various and sometimes discrepant materials of the Gospels. We do not deprecate criticism of the Gospels, though it be never so thorough; at this stage there need be no frantic appeals to dogmas of verbal or plenary inspiration in order to shield the Christ-ideal: it may be assumed that we are all simply truth-seekers. But when criticism has done its utmost, room must be given for the exercise of constructive imagination; having convinced ourselves of the heterogeneity of the traditions, their obscure and often doubtful sources, their anonymous editorship, we shall the more urgently demand a breath of real imagination, and a flash of historical insight, to restore the disintegrated picture of Jesus. "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon the slain, that they may live." In the natural process of criticism, certain marked traits of human nature are placed in opposition to the uniqueness and transcendence of the Christ-ideal; but, however often it may be disintegrated, phoenix-like this Ideal will rise again out of its ashes. Jesus has entered into human history and will never leave it; He has at least bequeathed to the world an ineffaceable Ideal of Himself. One of George Eliot's scientific friends once pointed out that the myriad lines and scratches on an old mirror, caused by the careless attempts to clean it, confused and running across each other, would all appear grouped and drawn into concentric circles whenever a lighted candle were held close to the glass. In like manner the radiant light of the Christ-ideal has been kindled by Jesus, and as we hold this light the myriad discrepancies and incoherencies of the Gospels are drawn into a new symmetry and vital unity. The image of Christ once received into man's mind becomes the touchstone of the very Gospels wherein it is portrayed. The result of our renewed inquiry into these Scriptures

will demonstrate that there is a real living Person behind the Christ-ideal, and hence, however often dissolved, the Ideal is recreated by His abiding inspiration. Jesus belongs to History, and must therefore be the perpetual subject of historical inquiry; but from the time-form of the Man of Nazareth emerges the Christ-ideal that is eternal. Faith's certainty of this Ideal emancipates the mind to pursue its investigations without misgiving, and a free inquiry refreshes our sense of the trustworthiness of both the realism of the Gospels and the idealism implicit in their composition.

## CHAPTER II

### FROM THE IDEAL TO THE HISTORIC CHRIST

I. THE Apostolic faith in the Christ-ideal was indissolubly bound up with the Jesus of History; the passage from the one to the other was along the line of personal experience, and was not the result of a philosophizing instinct in the Church leaders. Our attempt to retrace their path shows them to have been guided by a logic of life; while describing their theological Christ they kept their fingers on the actual pulse of history. The Ideal Person whom they had learned to love and trust had come to them through the gates of human birth, and they viewed the earthly history of Jesus as a little parenthesis in the eternity of the Logos-Son. Philosophers have ever stumbled in making the transition from an eternal calm to Time's stormy lake; the gulf between these two conceptions seems bridgeless. The Apostles sought no road in philosophy; their faith found a way from the preëxistent Ideal of Christ to the tragic sphere of history in the ethic of Divine Love. The doctrine of the Divine Incarnation was attained, not by speculation, but by a leap of faith—by direct intuition, by Reason's insight into the inner meaning of Jesus from the standpoint of the Resurrection. The New Testament is experimental rather than speculative; the writers have aimed at supplying ethical and religious needs rather than intellectual curiosity. The passage of the Son into our world was an ethical act of self-emptying—the pattern of humility in the Godhead. The incarnation of the Logos is described metaphorically as the pitching of a tent among us (*ἐσκήνωσεν*), while a third writer poetically writes of Jesus as the "effulgence of God's glory" (*ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης*). The problem of a dual consciousness in the Cosmic Logos and the Babe of Bethlehem did not come within the range of speculation; in their belief in the Resurrection the Apostles found a disclosure of the true nature of Jesus; henceforth He was to them a Divine Man. He is set forth in this atmosphere of faith not simply as a prophet,



but as the Word-incarnate; not as the chief of saints merely, but as a Saviour; not only as a martyr, but as a ransom.

2. Although it is no part of our task to give any sketch of the merely external history of Jesus, or of the times in which He lived, we may roughly suggest the background of His ministry by a few allusions to facts and factors of that age. The universal Christ-ideal sprang out of the dry ground of history when civilization was concentrated under the rule of Cæsar. The Gates of Janus were closed; Alexander's ambition to Hellenize the world was being rapidly realized under Rome itself; the ideas and language of Greece had become the medium of intellectual commerce throughout the world. In Alexandria, Philo had sought to reconcile Plato with Moses; Herod the Great strenuously toiled to Hellenize Judæa. Yet with all the intense activity, even the pomp of Rome cannot hide the lassitude that had fallen upon the higher intellect; in the world of action the heroic age was past, and in the realm of thought eclecticism had taken the place of creative power. There is no fear of confusing the Person of Jesus with His environment; the Christ-ideal is easily distinguishable from the *flora* and *fauna* of its geographical and historical setting. When we turn to the Gospels, we see that the spell of Jesus possessed the writers; they saw no light save that which shone from His face: hence, there are no soft shadings and gentle nuances in the background; the representations of the Pharisees are crude and severe, and the evangelists entirely omit all reference to the Essene pietists and mystics,—sects from whose wells even Jesus may have drunk. Our feeling for historic detail and our love of the picturesque are keener than theirs: "Many of us have felt that we would give all our books if we could but see with our own eyes how a single day was passed by a single ancient Jewish, Greek or Roman family; how the house was opened in the morning; how the meals were prepared; what was said; how the husband, wife and children went about their work; what clothes they wore, and what were their amusements."<sup>1</sup> Yet it is to be gravely doubted if any increase in our knowledge of these external things will throw very much light upon Jesus. "The New Testament must still be studied largely by light drawn from itself."<sup>2</sup> The growth of

<sup>1</sup> Mark Rutherford, *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. T. H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, p. 20.

the Roman Empire, however, affected the life of Jesus in many ways; the danger He had studiously to avoid in His Ministry was lest His movements should be taken for Jewish recalcitrancy against Rome; and yet we see that His death on the Cross was a Roman punishment. It is, however, one of the ironies of history that Rome's triumph of universal sovereignty was shared with that Hellenism which "swept victoriously in Asia, and established itself on all the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean." Such were some of the factors which Providence used to prepare the conditions necessary for the birth of the universal, ethical Religion which emerged in the apostolic faith in the Christ-ideal. While Jesus was by birth a Jew, there is nothing narrow, national or archaic in His figure in the Gospels. The very barrenness of Jewish politics and erudition forced the attention of Jesus into other and deeper channels. From the lowest deep Jesus sprang upward to the highest; and the focusing of His work upon the Godward relationship of man gave the whole world into His embrace. He could claim to be the World's Light; into that flaccid age He brought the exhilaration and buoyancy of a new dawn.

3. When we come to deal with the actual narratives of the Gospels which describe the mode of Christ's entrance into our world, we have to emulate Plato's skilful carver in cutting where the joint is; that is, we have to discriminate between symbolism and reality, opinion and faith, legend and history, certitude and feasibility. The nativity stories seem to have been translated from primitive Aramaic songs; whether mythical or historical, they illustrate the Church's faith in Christ Jesus. That both St. Paul and St. John omit all allusion to the miracle of the Virgin Birth, is at least evidence that the stories which relate it were not deemed by them to be integral parts of the Divine Revelation. The controversy over these narratives is not yet ended; but, should it ever come to pass that Jesus will be thought of as the natural son of Joseph and Mary, it will still remain true that the Word was made flesh. In an age such as ours, devoted to natural science and the comparative study of ethnic religions,<sup>1</sup> the story of Christ's parthenogenesis, found in two of our Gospels, was bound to be coördinated with similar wonder-tales, such as those relating to Buddha's advent, to Plato's descent from

<sup>1</sup> Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth-Stories*, p. 64.

Apollo, and to the divine birth of Augustus. Myths like these, rooted in hero-worship, give plausibility to the argument that the New Testament stories are purely legendary; although it is possible to turn the edge of this criticism by saying that all such legends found in classic and pagan literature serve to demonstrate the yearning of all nations for the coming of a Divine Friend. However treated, these wonder-tales of the Gospels remind us that the mystery of personality is not dissolved by reckoning only the physical factors of generation. Like water-lilies on the surface of a lake, which have roots winding down into hidden depths, so are the souls of men. Whenever Plato found his dialectic unequal to the delineation of great transcendental truths about human life, he resorted to imagination and projected great poetic myths to shadow forth his vision; and should it ever come to pass that the stories of the Gospels shall be discredited as matters of fact, they will still retain their place as the poetic insights of the higher imagination into the mystery of the Incarnation.

4. A place must be given in our reading of the Gospels to the play of a constructive impressionism, which is both as legitimate and as useful as historical criticism. Sloughing off all naturalistic presuppositions, we turn again as children to read the poetry of a Divine Incarnation. Joseph, the putative father of Jesus, appears in dim outline as an upright Jew, belonging like Mary to a spiritual Israel; tradition stamps him as middle-aged, and gives out that he died before Jesus reached manhood. Mary, a cultivated, gentle maid, imbued with the sublime hopes of her race, has taken her place in Christendom as the highest type of womanhood, crowned with the graces of chastity, love and maternal sacrifice. Before the consummation of her espousals the power of the Most High overshadowed her as the Shekinah, and announced that she should miraculously conceive and bear a Son who should fulfil the prophetic rôle of the Messiah. With a noble simplicity, Mary responded: "Behold, the bondmaid of the Lord! Be it unto me according to Thy word!" The successive steps in this Divine drama are set forth in rhythmic speech, which is at once flooded with exalted passion and held back with exquisite restraint. With perfect, if unconscious art, the evangelist describes the meeting of Mary with Elizabeth her kinswoman, when the leap of the unborn babe

within the priest's aged wife evoked a song of joy over the Mother of her Lord, and Mary responded in "the most magnificent cry of joy that ever issued from a human breast." Later, Zacharias breaks through the brooding silence of months with his *Benedictus*, "because of the tender-mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us." The actual chronicle of the Birth is bare and unadorned, although it is characterized by simple dignity and pathos; the Virgin Mother was untended in her travail, and the new-born child was laid in a manger. The contrariety of such a scene to all the gorgeous dreams of popular Messianism, seems a strong presumption in favour of its historicity; while, on the other hand, the silence of Mary herself about this miracle when her Son had reached manhood makes against the credibility of a miraculous conception. We dare not dogmatize upon the one view or the other; for, while the thought of the Virgin Birth harmonizes with the conception of the Christ-ideal entering into history, the two accounts in St. Matthew and St. Luke are difficult to reconcile with each other. Those who accept the miracle of the Birth do so, not because Nature's processes are too slow, but because they perceive in Jesus a new beginning in history. The substance of man was dyed with hues of hereditary guilt, and, in order that the entail of evil might be cut off, the Second Adam is thought to have come by Virgin Birth. Those who reason that Christ would assume the body of ordinary generation and cleanse it by the fires of His sinlessness, will need to remember that, in matters of Revelation, as also in the discovery of Nature's laws, we are not competent to judge *a priori* of what shall be;—we can only "think God's thoughts after Him."

5. One of the results of criticism is to show that the evangelists were saved from extravagances of fancy by their clear apprehension of the Christ-ideal; while they were not scientific historians, the character they aimed at describing was in itself their strongest motive for veracity. Any laxity in their feeling for truth would have led them into a boundless realm of puerility and superstition. St. Luke's brief and modest preface does not stamp every incident as *ipso facto* historical, but it does show a typical instance of honest research. We are able to discriminate between the wonder-tales and the genuine records of the ministry of Jesus, and upon examination it becomes apparent that the



former have but little vital connection with the development of Christ's public work, and are precious principally because of their noble symbolism. The story of the massacre of the Innocents and of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, is not incredible in the light of Herod's character; but there seems no room for it in the sequence of events described by St. Luke. Still as symbolism we may use the narrative as the artist has done in the picture named "Anno Domini," where a procession of soldiers, philosophers, statesmen, priests and musicians is arrested as the infant Jesus and His mother are led athwart the path; for thus truly was the Child Jesus drawn into connection with all the world. The faith of the Christian Church does not rest upon these tales, however; and to treat them as the basis of our religion is to stand the pyramid on its apex. "The Gospel" preceded the Gospels; these latter writings were a consequence, not a cause, of the Church's experience. And no narratives of miracle, nor doctrines of preëxistence and Incarnation, must be permitted to loosen our hold upon the true Humanity of Jesus. While the Ideal Christ is represented as a strong swimmer, who, having plunged into Lethe, steps out upon the shores of Time as other human beings, and occasionally recalls only faint memories of preëxistence, the Pauline doctrine of *Kenosis* enables us to study the life of Jesus as though He were simply man, so long as we remember that the true development of manhood depends upon reciprocity with God—for man becomes man only as he receives God; and the Divine Spirit was as the atmosphere in which the Man Jesus lived and moved and had His being.

6. In treating of the transition from the Ideal to the Historic Christ, the imagination may be legitimately used to gather the frail hints and suggestions accessible to us, and to focus the lights and shadows that hang over the silent years of Jesus. Dim as the figure of Joseph is, the man himself must have played an important and authoritative part in the early training of Jesus; for while between that homely carpenter and the Boy, there would be no unfilial sentiments, yet it could not but be that Joseph at times was puzzled by the thoughts and fancies, frankness and reserve of Jesus. Even Mary, if we judge from allusions in the Gospels, failed to understand her Son. We read of four brothers: James, Joses, Judas and Simon, and two unnamed sisters, who belonged to the family at Nazareth. These are some-

times thought of as step-brothers or cousins, although, apart from the ascetic sentiment of ecclesiastics, we have little reason for the assumption that they were not the children of Mary. During the youth-time of Jesus, many a misunderstanding might have occurred between Him and His brethren; and in Christ's saying about a prophet not failing to receive honour save in his own country, there may have lurked a reminiscence of loneliness and of lack of appreciation. At one period of His ministry, the members of His own family took Him to be beside Himself. We can conjecture the probable course of His education from the "Mishna" which, although not edited till A.D. 220, suggests the curriculum through which Jewish boys had passed for centuries. Before he was six years of age the father would teach Him to recite many of the Proverbs and Psalms, and explain to Him the history and meaning of the rites and customs belonging to their nation. Then Jesus would attend an elementary school, or "house of the Book," where He acquired the rudiments of culture. The Jews of that time must have been mostly bilingual, although Mahaffy's statement is extreme when he writes, "Though we may believe that in Galilee and among His intimates our Lord spoke Aramaic, and though we know that some of His last words upon the Cross were in that language, yet His public teaching, His discussions with the Pharisees, His talk with Pontius Pilate, were certainly carried on in Greek."<sup>1</sup> The range of Palestinian culture was limited by Jewish prejudices against other nations, yet it would be impossible to accentuate too strongly the elevating and refining influence of the Hebrew Scriptures upon the mind of Jesus; He was early responsive to the lofty ideas springing from the root-faith in God's Fatherhood which give such distinction to the Psalms. The stern Hebrew conscience was joined in Him with a keen sensibility to all that was grand and beautiful. He was thrilled by the austerity of the Law; fired by the imagination of the prophets; and melted by the devotion of the Psalms. Nature and the Scriptures were His daily food; through them there came to His Spirit the voice of the Heavenly Father. At twelve years of age, Jesus was invested with the ethical responsibilities of Jewish citizenship and celebrated this assumption of the manly toga by a solemn, joyous participation in the Feast of the Passover. The statement that "the Child grew and waxed strong,

<sup>1</sup> *Hellenism in Alexander's Empire*, p. 130.

becoming full of wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him,"<sup>1</sup> adds but little to our knowledge, though it suggests the Greek-like symmetry of His character. There is no hint of abnormality, or eccentricity in the youth of Jesus; the apocryphal legends of Him may be rejected as puerile and absurd. The story, in Luke, of the visit to the temple, marks a religious crisis in the soul of the growing boy, and a momentary collision of the filial instinct which turned heavenward with the habitual obedience to parental authority. St. Mark's explicit statement that Jesus was a carpenter,<sup>2</sup> suggests that He would feel the distressful antagonism between His vague yearnings for illimitable ideals and the narrow routine of a Jewish handicraft; and this would be a discipline in self-mastery. Since He was not enrolled as a pupil in any college of the Scribes, the title "Rabbi" must have been applied to Him in courtesy and recognition of His skill in teaching; for however lacking in scholastic drill, Jesus drew from an inexhaustible spring of inward wisdom. In walks around Nazareth, He harvested sheaves of rich poetic observation; in His attendance at the synagogue, He may have begun to acquire His matchless skill in dialectics; and in His annual pilgrimages to the capital He would glean knowledge by converse with Hellenists from Rome, Athens, Alexandria and the cities of Asia. He absorbed the intellectual heritage of His time, together with the limitations which belonged to contemporary thought; hence the necessity of distinguishing in His later teaching between the essential and the accidental, between the timeless Word of God and its temporal vehicles of expression. In the noblest literature of Greece, the highest thought is mingled with matters grotesque and sometimes revolting, but in the teaching of Jesus we find unique purity and sustained elevation; whatever intellectual errors may belong to the Gospels, there are no moral lapses. Throughout the life of Jesus there was an ethical continuity; the noble self-sacrifice of the public ministry had grown from roots in the life at Nazareth. It may be suspected that the decease of Joseph early threw upon Him the obligation of maintaining the home by His toil in the carpenter shop, and perhaps shut out from His youthful thoughts the Jewish desire of marriage; the tree which bore such fruit of altruism at Calvary was the transplanted self-denial of obscure years: He may have been one of those

<sup>1</sup>Luke ii. 40, 52; cf. Judg. xiii. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Mark vi. 3, τέκτων.

“which have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.”

7. But all our efforts to discover how the Christ-ideal grew up in our history only show us how impenetrable are the clouds that encircle the personality of Jesus. We cannot speak of Him as though He were the simple product of His environment; the increasing knowledge of His time and place in history leaves Him still the Great Enigma to Naturalism: to us He is God's Ideal, projected into the plexus of human relationships. Jesus appears to have sustained uninterrupted and full obedience to the Will of God in all its successive disclosures, and through this reciprocity with the Divine Spirit He realized the crown of perfect Humanity. It is well-nigh impossible for us to think of Him as being the subject of gross temptations; struggles He passed through severer far than such as are known to us, but they were not the products of selfishness and lust. He kept Himself unsullied; it is no wonder, therefore, that His Birth was imagined to be miraculous. As He grew up, few of the influences that beat upon His soul were more potent than the incoherent, political and apocalyptic ideas of popular Messianism. At certain junctures of His experience, He must have felt responsiveness to the monarchical ideal of the Psalms which shone in the Hebrew imagination as a glowing picture—all gold and crimson. But over against this He contemplated an ideal lost sight of by most of His contemporaries—the deutero-Isaiah's conception of the suffering Servant of Jehovah. Until His Baptism, Jesus may have remained unconscious of His predestined vocation, except for His vague feelings of latent power; but when the crisis came He had to choose between these two ideals. Although sensitive to His nation's need, He did not mar His work by prematurity, but waited in quiet strength and self-repression for the irresistible imperative of His Father's call. He did not hurry into hazardous situations and by unbalanced zeal imperil the sacred cause of Truth; but He set a wise restraint upon all the immature fervours and heats of youth, aiming only to do the Sovereign Will of His Father. In the shadowy background of those silent years we see the dim figure of Jesus the Carpenter living a life of strenuous toil and disciplinary self-repression—at times lonely, yet not unjoyous; a devout, prayerful and meditative man. There need be no faint-hearted fear that



Jesus is thus conceived of too humanly. In making our passage from the Apostolic Ideal to the Historic Jesus of the Gospels, we have sought only to avoid unnecessary dogmas in preparation for the subsequent examination of all the facts and factors in Christ's public ministry; some questions that meet us at the very beginning cannot be answered until we reach the end.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

I. "WE have come to the last days, and a new succession of ages dawns. The Virgin returns, and a new race is ready to descend from the lofty heavens."<sup>1</sup> This remarkable prediction reflects the universal expectation of some momentous change in the world's history. The genius of Greece was well-nigh spent; Rome had subdued the nations and made the Mediterranean its imperial lake; the fulness of the time had come; the old age was to terminate, a new one was to begin. In Palestine the foolish internecine quarrels of the Asmoneans had resulted in the complete vassalage of the Jews, first to Pompey, and then to Cæsar. While Herod the Great had sought to ingratiate himself by the rebuilding of the temple, he had assiduously paganized Jewish life; he covered the land with magnificent buildings in Greek and Roman styles of architecture; even within the walls of Jerusalem he established a theatre, wherein were exhibited the sanguinary horrors of gladiatorial contests; and, as a final insult to the nation which he governed, he had caused the golden image of an eagle to be set up over the gate of the temple. Herod's death did not bring emancipation to Israel, for the dispute between Archelaus and Herod Antipas caused the chains of servitude to be fastened more securely upon this high-spirited people: at last, all remaining vestiges of autonomy were swept away. Judæa sank into the state of a petty Roman province, and the procurator, generally a governor of equestrian rank, was responsible to the legate in Syria, or directly to Rome, whither at a later date Vitellius sent Pilate for trial. Fiery patriots arose, one after another, to lead the forlorn hope of revolt; but the only result of these frequent risings, besides the immediate bloodshed, was to increase the rigour of the Roman government. What a strange, sad, heroic history Israel has had! Enslaved by Egypt, crushed and exiled by Assyria, at the mercy

<sup>1</sup> Virgil's *Eclogues*.

of Persia, overrun by Greeks, and now subjugated by Rome! But the paradox of her history had always been that fondest hopes of liberty sprang up at those times when succor seemed most improbable. The prophets declared that Jehovah would have His day, and bring deliverance and triumph to His down-trodden people. The subsequent centuries have shown that the soul of Israel can never die. At the time of John's appearing, the Jewish people were full of hopes and presentiments of the coming of some great deliverer.

2. Great men are God's best gifts to nations, and the world's greatest men are discoverers of the ideal and prophets of righteousness. Prophets like Isaiah and John the Baptist enrich all nations. There is a wise instinct which makes the Chinese, even while seeking to possess the arts and sciences of the West, refuse to reckon our mechanicians and inventors as comparable with the sages and princely characters of their own antiquity. The pioneers who lead the advance in morals and religion do more for mankind than all others; and among the greatest prophets of this Higher Humanity Jesus ranked John the Baptist. It is not easy, however, for us to form a true judgement about this great man since our historical data are but a few fragments. We see that the work of John was part-cause of the Christian religion; or, more correctly, we infer that the revival of Israel's Spirit by the preaching of John created an important tributary to the great movement that formed the Christian Church. Not at once, but after some years, the work of John was absorbed by Christianity, and carried forward to ends he never anticipated. It is easily understood why Josephus should be silent about John's belief concerning the coming of the Messiah; but our Gospels are doubtless correct in representing him as speaking of himself as the herald of another. We must, however, refuse any conventional acceptance of this title for John which hides the greatness of his character and work. Theologians have too resolutely subordinated John's ministry as a mere preparation for the work of Jesus, and as a consequence we are in danger of missing the reality of John's career. Just as one can suck the life and meaning out of facts by, let us say, applying the "law of average," so, by subjecting John's life to the dogmatic rule that he went before Jesus, only to prepare the way, we come at length to reduce the great prophet to a shadow. Our own

minds will be enriched by fully recognizing the intrinsic greatness of John's manhood. As we shall set forth later, his work did not cease when Jesus began to preach; John was first in time, though he himself perceived the spiritual priority of Jesus; and John's appeal stirred the dying pulse of conscience in the nation, and did much to prepare the atmosphere in which the movement of Jesus might grow; and yet John's school was separate from that of Jesus, and continued so down to the age of Apollos. On the other hand, misunderstanding is increased tenfold by any attempts to place John above Jesus, and by insinuations that "the baptism unto repentance" was the origination of Christianity.

3. Although the impression made by John the Baptist upon the Jewish nation was evidently very great for a time, only a few facts are recorded concerning him. Josephus sums up his ministry in a sentence: "John exhorted the Jews to practise virtue and to be righteous toward each other and pious toward God, and to assemble for baptism."<sup>1</sup> St. Luke has preserved the fullest account of him; he was of priestly descent on both sides; and his parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, lived in "a city of Judah in the hill country." Whether we ascribe little or much value for history to the song of Zacharias, it must reflect the early thought and emotion stirred in Christian circles by the memories of John. His birth was about the year 6 B.C., and came to be regarded as the signal that Jehovah was preparing to fulfil His covenant-promise with Abraham, the issue of which accomplishment would be the moral and political redemption of Israel. The song, which is moulded upon Old Testament prophecies, represents John to be the Preparer of Jehovah's way foretold in the oracles of the deutero-Isaiah and Malachi.<sup>2</sup> The third evangelist speaks of his boyhood after the Old Testament manner just as he does about Jesus: "the hand of the Lord was with him," and "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel" (*ἀναδειξέως αὐτοῦ*). The angel Gabriel is said to have prophesied of his Nazarite discipline: "He shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from His mother's womb."<sup>3</sup> With these slender

<sup>1</sup> *Ant.*, xviii., v. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xl. 3-5; Mal. iii. 1; iv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Luke i. 15, 39, 66, 80.

materials, and our reasonable conjecture that the youth would make annual visits to Jerusalem to share in the great festivals at the temple, we must construct our mental picture of John until the time of his public ministry. His eremite fare was locusts and wild honey; his raiment was a cloak of camel's hair bound about with a leathern girdle. It is possible that John was influenced in early life by the Essenes, whose cenobia were on the west of the Dead Sea. Through his father's wish the boy, after Zacharias's death, or perhaps before, may have been placed among these pious and laborious ascetics, who made up for losses by death in their celibate community by adopting children, and admitting those who renounced the world. In such a school John might have learnt that austere purity that was so prominent a characteristic of his manhood. But the negative desire of the Essenes to withdraw from evil could not have engendered in John's mind the conviction of a Divine commission to reform Israel. Whoever may have been John's tutors—and perhaps he was schooled chiefly by the Divine Spirit in his solitude, his days were regulated by devotion to the high things of the soul; and from the few sentences recorded of his preaching, it may be inferred that he read and brooded over the oracles of prophecy until his mind was fired by the old ideals.

4. St. Matthew alludes vaguely to the beginning of John's ministry—"in those days"; but the third evangelist defines, with utmost elaboration, many of the events that synchronized with it, and we judge that "the showing of John unto Israel" took place about A.D. 28. Fain would we trace the crisis which transformed the solitary devotee into a great prophet; but his call is simply stated without comment, "the word of God"<sup>1</sup> came to him in the wilderness. His previous life had been a preparation for this crisis: the spiritual struggles of the hermit culminated in an experience of Divine possession; a fire began to burn in his soul; he could no longer remain silent—the whole man became a voice—a shout of warning—God's trumpet in Israel. The voice of prophecy had been silent for centuries: it was as though the shocks of adversity had exhausted the very fountain of inspiration; and the place that the prophet had left vacant was occupied by scribes, lawyers, Pharisees. It was said that "from the time that the temple was destroyed, the gift of

<sup>1</sup> Luke iii. *ῥῆμα θεοῦ*.



prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the wise." The age of John was a period when the schools of the Sadducees and Pharisees flourished; the Sadducees were aristocratic sceptics, political cynics and opportunists; among the Pharisees there were some men of enlightenment and ideas; but the greater number of them were narrow souls and rigorous pedants. Students gave themselves up to wearisome trifling, and invisible chains were placed upon the living conscience. It was an age of the letter, and the spirit was being stifled. Instead of falling like some fertilizing pollen upon men's minds, the sayings of the fathers and learning of the past fell like sterilizing blight upon men's intellects. Away in the desert John escaped this deadening influence, and long-continued faithfulness to God resulted in growing sensitiveness to the touch of the Divine Spirit; he was prepared to be the channel of new inspiration and revelation. Breadth of culture, erudition, and fertility of ideas are precious things in the equipment of men for great work, but they do not constitute prophecy; a prophet must be formed by profound intuition into the Divine counsel, and by the resistless feeling that God is driving him to announce the truths stamped on his soul. Like John, his ideas may be few and elementary; but he is God's thrall, and must utter God's message. Though no sign came from Heaven, the mind of John was seized and held captive by the conviction that the "kingdom of heaven" was imminent. He had not discarded the political mould into which the Messianic ideal was cast; but he saw that before any political dream could be realized, Israel must be subjected to a great purification. The axe was laid at the root of the tree of national life; and if the tree was to be spared, it must bring forth the fruits of repentance. John anticipated a theophany of magnitude and grandeur, whereby Divine judgement would be inflicted upon evil persons, and salvation be gained by those who repent. As to Amos, so to John, Jehovah's Day was to be one of retribution and terror for the guilty, and his task as a prophet was to make ready for the advent of the Divine Sovereign. The key-word of all the Baptist's preaching was "repentance"—*metanoia*, which signified self-detachment from evil and direction of the mind and will upon God. This message was hurled forth with the force of moral certitude and winged with noble enthusiasm. Jewish society cherished the prejudice that descent from Abraham gave an inherent right to participate in the

Divine Kingdom. John, however, made it plain that race-feeling was no reasonable ground of assurance; for society must ultimately rest on conscience. As for the blood-tie, God could dispense with it, and, if it were necessary, could raise up children to Abraham from the stones of the desert. John gave no evidence of constructive power, such as Moses exercised, to form a nation from tribes of slaves; his mission was totally different—to awaken a degenerate nation out of their dogmatic slumber; to turn the hearts of men away from a false patriotism, and to induce them to anticipate the reign of God by moral reform. He would rectify the social inequalities by the practice of community in dress and food, and imitation of the voluntary poverty of the Essenes. He rebuked the restless greed for riches shown by the tax-collectors, and inculcated upon the soldiers whose consciences were touched the restraint of all violence and outrage; and, to the astonishment of traditionalists, he neither refused these classes his baptism nor demanded of them the renunciation of their profession. Only when approached by the proud, self-satisfied Pharisees did he burst forth in wrath and invective. He had no statesman's programme; his message was one of elementary ethics; its permanent value lay in the unfaltering enunciation of the fundamental dictates of conscience as the true basis of the new theocracy. To preach so rudimentary a message as this may have been the mission of a precursor, or herald; yet at times of national decadence through the collapse or putrefaction of customary religious beliefs, there is no other way to the resurgence of hope and vigour than that of falling back upon this simple Divine *rema*, or Word, which inspired John.

5. One feature which impressed John's contemporaries more than any other was his use of baptism: this symbolic act touched the imagination of Israel and won for him the title of "the Baptist." This rite is not to be hastily identified with the ablutions of the Essenes any more than with the Indian practice of bathing in the Ganges; John himself signified by it the preparatory initiation of the penitent into the covenant community of Jehovah; and it fitly symbolized the need of the individual's regeneration. When the Pharisee-critics disputed concerning his authority to baptize men, he affirmed with simple dignity that God sent him to baptize with water. Our uncertainty whether

baptism was by immersion or effusion, only indicates that the rite was not affected in its meaning and value by external modes. Slight verbal variations in the evangelist's descriptions of this rite are not without interest—"a baptism of repentance for remission of sins," and a "baptism unto (*εἰς* repentance"; its objective aim was the Divine pardon, and its inward or subjective intention was the death of self to sin and consecration to a new life. The desert prophet could not attach to this rite the symbolism of Christ's death and resurrection, as St. Paul did; yet in principle, John's baptism meant the same twofold spiritual experience—death to sin and life unto righteousness.

6. The third evangelist describes one of the results of the Baptist's preaching. All the people were set musing whether John himself might not be the expected Messiah; but in answer to their inquiries, he disclaimed all pretensions to the office of Jehovah's anointed, and differentiated his baptism from that spiritual effusion which the true Messiah was destined to administer. In the Fourth Gospel, a similar inquiry is made by deputies from the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem; but so different in spirit and aim is it in its triple form, that we do not think it refers to the same incident. He will let neither friends nor foes think that he is the Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet Jeremiah: he describes himself simply as a voice crying in the wilderness; and when his own authority is called in question, he boldly announces that the true Messiah is standing in their midst, though they know Him not, and on the following day points out Jesus as the Coming One. If this representation of the Fourth Gospel be regarded as lacking the authority of history, we have still the Synoptic tradition that the coming of the Messiah was the burden of his prophecy. Jehovah's Kingdom was about to be established, and John utters an imperious call for Israel to make ready by righteousness. The utterances attributed to the Baptist delineate the unknown Messiah as some mighty personality of regal dignity, whose shoes John feels he would be unworthy to unloose. His ministry is to be one of judgement: He comes to His threshing-floor with "the fan in His hand," and He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. We wonder how John could ever have identified the Gentle Nazarene with such a majestic and terrible office! Yet even through the rifted clouds of judgement he caught glimpses of



the permanent sway of peace and right. He perceived that, besides being a political ideal, the Messianic Kingdom also embraced the moral order of the world, and was the potential soul of the sensuous phenomena of the material realm. Jehovah, however, was still a righteous Sovereign outside man, before whom man must bow in penitence; the Kingdom was still external, though based on moral laws, so that naught that defileth or maketh a lie can enter it. The sublimity of this ideal is patent to all, but it was limited by John's nationalism, and its defect lay in its external transcendence; for the prophet was conscious that only one who could baptize with the Spirit could make it immanent in man. The Fourth Gospel accurately appraises John's character and ministry—"a man sent from God to bear witness to the Light"; but he was not the Light.

7. A thrill of religious revival passed through the land, and representatives of all classes flocked to the Jordan to confess their sins and be baptized. Had John desired it he might easily have been accepted as the Messiah, although there were critics who accused him of being possessed by a demon. But neither flattery nor censure could cause John to swerve; he was free from the last weakness of many noble men; no egoistic ambition tainted his mission; he was filled by a true enthusiasm for righteousness. In many moods he recalled to men's minds the impressive figure of Elijah, and Jesus spoke of him afterwards as the Elias that was to come. This picturesque and rugged Man of God awoke a temporary response in Israel: a spirit of hope breathed over the people; but after the lapse of a few months, the moths that fluttered around this burning, lamplike character grew dissatisfied, and the movement ebbed, leaving another school or sect behind. Once again the sky grew dark, and John lived long enough to see the waning of the enthusiasm he had kindled with such hope.

## CHAPTER IV

### JESUS IS BAPTIZED BY JOHN

I. THE real life of every personality is surrounded by thick clouds and darkness; nevertheless, if its central light be strong enough, the obscurity is shot through with revealing lines and tints, and in the case of the highest, noblest humanity, the mist becomes a nimbus of glory. But when we seek to read the inner processes of the life of Jesus, the difficulty we experience in understanding any experience but our own is intensified by the very light that reveals Him. And yet, since our secret is made plain in His Enigma—the purpose and meaning of our manhood being set forth most completely in Him—we are urged forward in attempts to understand Him, even at the peril of losing our way amid limitless conjectures and illusions. Jesus alone shows us the perfect norm of our nature; He is most natural; but the very completeness of His personal development makes Him seem to us, who are so imperfect, a Supernatural Man. The New Testament, however, makes it plain that He attained this fulness of human life by passing through all the stages and processes of man's growth. An erratic tendency of present-day thought is to look back to the beginnings of life in order to discover the real nature of things; but the only correct judgement must be based on "ends," not upon "origins." The wonderful "Key of Evolution," which has unlocked so many mysteries of life, fails to open the secrets of man's moral personality; the best and highest qualities in man are elicited from potentiality into actuality only through intercourse and association with others. Jesus shows us how the *pleroma* of humanity can be attained only when man is in conscious reciprocity with God. The secret of the youth and manhood of Jesus was that He grew in conscious relationship to the Heavenly Father: this was not only the metaphysical ground of His Life, it was also the chosen attitude of His Will. We all have occasional visitations of the filial moods—vague susceptibilities awakened, then slumbering amid the sequent conditions of sense. But with Jesus this spiritual consciousness was no rare mood; it was, rather,

the permanent attitude of His Will. This filial spirit was the supreme attainment of humanity; not only a human endeavour, but also a gift of Divine Grace. His mature character is the product of the reciprocal operations of the Divine and human—the final result of His efforts, struggles, and concentrated pursuit of moral and spiritual ideals: yet even so, His human aspirations were Divine inspirations, transmuting all personal passion and desires into the fine gold of a surrendered will. In the Baptism and subsequent temptation-period, one of these momentous crises in the experience of the Son of Man is preserved for our instruction and illumination.

2. In the Gospel of the Hebrews, Mary and the brothers of Jesus are reported to have proposed that Jesus should go forth to the Baptism of John, and in reply Jesus repudiated any necessity for doing so, as He had no consciousness of sin. Whatever truth may underlie this statement, it appears credible that some conversation between Mother and Son must have preceded His determination to submit to this ritual of repentance; and if we imagine that Jesus already foresaw that He was now to abandon His occupation to take up a public ministry, He must have made known His purpose to the members of His family, and transferred to a younger brother the responsibility in which His seniority had involved Him. The great change about to take place in the life of Jesus had been foreshadowed by presentiments of His high calling; and in the sacred colloquies between Mary and her Son, there must have been scintillations from the dark ground of mystery in which His life was rooted. Is there any parallel in the “confidences” between Augustine and Monica told in the “Confessions” of the former? “She and I stood alone, leaning at a certain window which overlooked the garden of the house which we occupied in Ostia on the Tiber; where, withdrawn from the crowd, we were recruiting from the fatigue of a long journey before our voyage. We then conversed alone very sweetly; and ‘forgetting those things which were behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before,’ we were inquiring between ourselves, in the presence of the Truth, which Thou art, of what nature the eternal life of the saints would be, ‘which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man.’”<sup>1</sup> At least it is

<sup>1</sup> *Aug. Conf.*, bk. ix., ch. x.

certain that the family of Mary of Nazareth did not escape the thrill of expectancy and hope occasioned by the voice of John.

3. The differences between the narratives of the Baptism have caused many difficulties that cannot be easily dispersed. St. Matthew reports that John at first sought to prevent the submission of Jesus to the rite, on the ground that his relative from Nazareth was superior to himself. "Assisted by his prophetic endowment, he read the heart of this man, and recognized that there no consciousness of guilt interrupted the communion between Him and His God."<sup>1</sup> St. John's Gospel sets forth the Baptizer as saying, "I did not know Him myself; but He who sent me to baptize . . . said to me, 'On whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and resting upon Him, the same is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" In view of St. Matthew's representation, the Baptizer's ignorance of Jesus must be thought to relate, not to His person, but to His office as the Messiah. There have been some who, from an early period, believed that neither Jesus nor His friends knew that He was the Messiah before Elias anointed Him for the office.<sup>2</sup> It would relieve dogmatists of no little embarrassment, if from St. John's testimony the inference might be made that the Baptist bore witness to the Messiah without administering the rite of baptism unto repentance. But when we push through all discrepancies and seek to make a synthesis of the details recorded, it is almost beyond doubt that, when Jesus came to John to be baptized, the Baptist recognized Him, and because of his reputation for purity, or by divination of the spotless character of this member of the penitent Israel, he hesitated to perform the rite until Jesus persuaded him of its propriety. The subsequent or accompanying scene will be framed differently, according to one's prepossessions. But it is probable, in the highest degree, that the symbolism of the descending dove and heavenly voice means that, in some manner convincing to both, Jesus became the subject of a fresh Divine anointing, and John, as well as He, had the sure intuition that the Man of Nazareth was the Chosen One, or designated Messiah.

<sup>1</sup> Weiss, *The Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 320, English Ed.

<sup>2</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho*, viii., 3, 110, English Ed. Justin.

4. According to St. Luke, Jesus at this time was about thirty years of age; in keeping with the propriety of Hebrew feeling, Jesus may have waited till He reached the minimum limit for the beginning of the Levitical ministry<sup>1</sup>; although the evangelist's phrase (*ὥσει ἐτῶν τριάκοντα*) is an elastic one, permitting a margin of uncertainty. By definitely stating that Jesus came after all the people had been baptized, the evangelist suggests that His inauguration as Messiah took place in the presence of the disciples of John after the great crowds had departed. The ordinary and formal confession of sin might have been substituted by a frank unfolding of the mind of Jesus, so that instinctively, as He talked, John felt that, however much others needed purification, Jesus at least could receive no new grace from his hands. The man who had so sternly rebuked the pride of the Pharisees in their Abrahamic descent, became lowly and gentle in the presence of Jesus, saying: "I have need to be baptized by Thee!" Perhaps it was the first time in his experience that John was daunted, and made to feel himself the moral inferior of another. This discernment and penetration into character is no mere fancy. Again and again, a man of great scholarship has been impressed by the greater dignity of some acquaintance who has no claim to learning that comes from books; sometimes a doctor knows intuitively that the silent or slow-speaking patient who has laboured with his hands is a greater personality than himself. Contact with Jesus made most men feel His spiritual transcendence, and the noble Prophet of the Desert could not escape from this impression. But the greater souls are ever ready to learn of the less; and in seeking to be baptized by His kinsman, Jesus evinced a willingness to be guided by his teaching. However diffident John felt, he was for the time the instructor of Jesus, and he probably suggested that He should go into the wilderness and follow an ascetic rule of life preparatory to the next step. Listening to the Baptist's message concerning the imminence of the Kingdom of God, Jesus must have felt His heart burn within Him, though He may not have fully realized the certainty that He was the elected Messiah. His future was as yet undefined; He was waiting for the Divine call.

5. The motive assigned for His baptism is somewhat vague—"thus it behoves us to fulfil all righteousness." The least sig-

<sup>1</sup>Num. iv. 3.



nificance that can be given to this is that it appeared to Him right—it was the Divine Will; therefore, He gladly conformed. Attempts to emphasize the freedom of Jesus from sin, and consequent immunity from the need of confession and pardon, tend sometimes to encourage the illusion that He never experienced the usual weaknesses and failings that beset men in this life. While it would be most incongruous to attribute to Him gross sin or animalism, it must not be forgotten that all virtue, even the virtue of Jesus, is the result of resistance and struggle. Even the Son of Man had to exercise constant choice between higher and lower alternatives of means and motives; and though all the circumstances of our probation were not mirrored in His preparation, yet He was tempted—tempted in all points as we are. And while it seems to many a going beyond our real knowledge to say that never once was Jesus betrayed into making choice of any but the best means to His ends, we need not hesitate to say that it is exceeding the bounds of sound judgement to aver that because He was man He must have fallen. We only know that Jesus had the appetites, passions and sensibilities of our common humanity; and the result of His vigilant struggle was that, when He went forth to be baptized He had completed the subordination of all these natural feelings and tendencies to His life-purpose of doing God's Will. At the Jordan, as in the Garden, He could say: "Not My will, but Thine be done"; but this perfect obedience He had learned by the things He suffered. As the question of His sinlessness must be discussed in connection with later stages of His life, His baptism need be treated only as an act of self-identification with the Jewish race. He joined in the national movement initiated by John, and thus gave expression to His feeling that He was one with the world—a Brother of all mankind. The Pharisees resented John's universal call to penitence and baptism, regarding it as a signal humiliation of their order; Jesus deemed it a part of righteousness to comply. Baptism was the ritual expression of inward purification; it symbolized renunciation of self-will, and the entrance upon a new life of preparation for God's Reign. In the case of Jesus, submission to baptism gave concrete form to the renewed dedication of Himself to the Kingdom of the Father, and at the same time showed His whole-souled sympathy with the needs and emotions of the people. It was a spiritual palingenesis; even Jesus was

born of water and of the Spirit. He who made the little child a symbol of discipleship, became Himself in manhood as a little child—lowly and pure.

6. The outward baptism by John, however, was subordinate to the momentous spiritual crisis now reached in the inner experience of Jesus: concomitant with it was the theophany witnessed by both actors in this ceremony. As Jesus rose up from the water, the skies appeared to open and God's Spirit descended, while a voice rang in their hearts testifying that He was the beloved Son—the Son in Whom the Heavenly Father delighted. The evangelists cite various forms of this Divine testimony; the first two adopting the deutero-Isaiah's description of Jehovah's Servant,<sup>1</sup> the third quoting from the Psalms<sup>2</sup>; but a partial account of this confusion may be that the ambiguity between "son" and "servant" in Greek had no place in the Aramaic sources of their traditions. St. Luke accentuates the objectivity of the dove's appearance, although in the earlier gospels the dove might be taken as a simile. It is possible that literary metaphor had been transformed by repetition till it seemed a part of the actual occurrence. Dogmatism, either of doubt or of belief, is excluded by appreciation of the mystery of Nature and Spirit: the visible universe is the symbolism of an invisible order; and it is possible the Creator's thought might be suggested by the phenomenon of the dove, as it is equally possible that to the imagination of John the gentle brooding character of Jesus might be fitly pictured as the dove of the Holy Spirit hovering over Him. The essential fact of this experience is that God's Spirit actually rested upon Jesus; into Him there passed an effluence or emanation from the Divine Fount, which caused His life to unfold new energies and gracious ministries. The Spirit of God is God Himself, streaming forth and resting in beneficent activity upon chosen agents, endowing them with mighty inspiration and illumination. The realm of human life is full of mystery, and personality is developed by receptivity and reciprocity, not by isolation and exclusion. To those who think of Jesus as the Child of the Spirit, whose "ego" was the Divine Logos, it may seem difficult to explain the need of this spiritual effusion. These correlative factors in the life of the Son of Man (typical man) are spoken of by

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. ii. 7.



St. John as the seed and the chrism (σπέρμα and χρίσμα) or anointing of the Divine Spirit. The seed contains the life-force and definite type which regulates the form of growth; the Divine chrism educes and nourishes the inward principle. Although men seem to stand in quasi-independence of God, yet they are utterly dependent upon the Divine power to uphold them: so, likewise, Jesus was separate from, and yet most intimately dependent upon, the Heavenly Father. To Him, and to all who follow Him, there come repeated new-births and increasing revelations. After a long period of loyalty in obscure and monotonous toils, there came this outpouring of the Divine Spirit—the uprising in His soul of a Divine power which augmented His natural energies. He had been growing and gaining deepened insight as the years rolled by, acquiring enlarged capacity for His ministry; and now in a supreme moment, when all His native gifts and faculties were prepared to receive it, there came this pentecostal advent of the Spirit of God in fulness unknown before, sweeping into the interior recesses of His nature, and giving Him in a moment the crown of Perfect Manhood. “Thee o’er thyself I therefore crown and mitre.”<sup>1</sup> God’s perfect idea of Manhood was born in Him; He realized in Himself the Divine Sonship of humanity. That is His difference from us; we only partially attain the goal: but of Him the Father in heaven could testify, “This day have I begotten Thee.” The quiet years of His life at Nazareth had resulted in the accumulation of forces which, at the Divine touch, burst forth in flame, irradiating His person as the Messianic Son of God. John knew Him now as the Object of Divine approval; while Jesus Himself felt the Father’s smile alight upon Him. Though God’s Spirit had wrought within Him all through the years, He now became the subject of a new, special effusion of spiritual power; and in His exultation, no movement of self disturbed or put to flight the love of Grace and Truth.

7. The open skies suggest that with piercing vision He now read the Divine decree, and knew Himself to be the fulfilment of the promise spoken in prophecy and psalm. His call had come; He knew that He was the Divine Son. One of Swedenborg’s pregnant fancies was that, in intercourse with men, angels’ thoughts are transmitted through the moulds of earthly memory,

<sup>1</sup> *Purg.*, xxvii., 142.

and should one actually be caught up to hear their higher speech, like St. Paul, he would find such Heavenly wisdom incommunicable.<sup>1</sup> And it was in the mould afforded by memory of ancient oracle that the communication now came to Jesus and John of the voice from the riven heaven. The Man of Nazareth came into full consciousness that in a unique manner He was the beloved Son of God; the fuller meanings of His ever-dominant Spirit of filial submission effloresced in His mind and heart; and it was new in Jesus, just as the flower is new when, after growing and budding, it at last pushes through its calyx and consummates itself. The term "Son" is no metaphor of physical or metaphysical fact, but the moral truth of the perfect manhood of Jesus. Never before had Jesus realized all the meaning of the Divine Fatherhood; and, being man, the consciousness of Sonship had ebbed and flowed in the tides of His life: henceforth, the fulness of His filial relationship poured into all the experiences of His life. Sonship was a fact woven into every act; a faith which inspired His every thought; a realized idea which, like a fountain, poured out in pure streams in His emotions. The Spiritual endowment Jesus received at baptism gave a transparency to the material media of life; He saw the "ideas" of God which sought to embody themselves; while a citizen of earth He was conscious of Heaven, and looked immediately on the works of His Heavenly Father. In all His subsequent experiences the Spirit could not be quenched by the flesh, and to His penetrating insight the ideal ground of life lay clearly disclosed. The full explication of this baptism of the Spirit had, however, to be realized through the new temptations that assailed Him as He struggled to apprehend the meaning and duty of the Messiah. Before passing to that memorable struggle, we may note that there was no self-sufficiency in Jesus; we must not imagine Him to have carried in Himself from the beginning all that He became; He lived the true life of man, and in certain crucial moments received accessions of power such as all men may obtain; and, when ripe for the crisis, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and passed through all later experiences in perfect correspondence with this Divine Person.

<sup>1</sup> *Heaven and Hell*, p. 256.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TEMPTATION OF THE SON OF GOD

I. THE place and importance of the baptism of Jesus in the preparation for His active ministry were apprehended very distinctly by our earliest evangelist. It was the investiture of Jesus with spiritual royalty and the authentication of the Divine Sonship realized in His humanity. We have already learned caution in speaking of the mysteries of personality, since, in our own imperfect stage of manhood, we form a true conception of personal life only by a process of idealization; we project the traits we find essential in our own souls, and imagine them in their perfected and balanced harmony in a typical man. Jesus is represented in the Gospels and in the Epistles as realizing the true spirituality of manhood; He is the Spirit-anointed man—the one Spirit-filled character of universal history. The Christ of St. Paul is the risen, victorious and regnant Spirit; He has accomplished all the stages of this historic pilgrimage across our world; “He has been determined as the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” But the Gospels give us glimpses of the struggles and conflicts that preceded this glorification; in their pages we see the warrior Son of man fighting towards the final vanquishing of defeat and death. The Spirit of holiness that so signally attested the Divine Sonship of Jesus was at once an endowment and an attainment. The anointing of His Manhood by the Spirit of God was the fruition of thirty years of resolute obedience, and made the spiritual side of his complex nature paramount over the flesh. This divine chrism did not relieve Jesus of the common burden and struggle of our life; for there were still factors of evil in His environment to be resisted unto blood; and within His own consciousness the demands of the flesh had to be controlled by a conscience which had become the perfect instrument of the Spirit of God. As, by the baptism unto repentance, Jesus sympathetically avowed His identification with a race of sinners and became historically bound up with the solidarity of universal man, so by the Divine anoint-

ing and attestation of filial relationship with the Heavenly Father He lifted mankind into reciprocity with the life of God.

2. Our consciousness of sin and of incompleteness in the realization of God's ideal of man prevents us from attaining to a total comprehension of the fellowship of Jesus with God. The office of Messiah is sometimes treated as implying divineness of character; but we shall fail to understand such union between God and man so long as we approach the fact metaphysically or merely speculatively. If, however, we contemplate it ethically and humanly, we shall receive fuller and fuller light upon the person of Jesus. What we term the divinity of Jesus does not involve emancipation from human trial; it does not leave us with only a docetic Christ; it is the expression of the truth that Jesus of Nazareth received the Spirit of God into His life by moral choice, and wrought out His destiny as the Son of God. Whatever gifts of mind or of genius may have formed the birthright of Jesus, we must conceive of His moral excellences as secured humanly in accordance with the conditions that encircle the true nature of man. When we use the term "humanly," however, it must not be imagined that we imply severance from God; man becomes man only by his interaction with the Divine Spirit, even in Jesus the holiness realized through personal effort was due to God's working in Him to will and to do all righteousness. The exact relationship of God's Spirit to man's spirit is barely definable; in fact, it is almost inscrutable. We know that man must win his personality by efforts of will; he has to use his will when it is only a potentiality within him; and yet all the time it is God's Spirit entering into him and constituting that which we denote by the word personality.

One of the notes of modern thought is the renewed emphasis upon this fundamental affinity for Himself with which God has endowed man. Man is *capax dei*: the uniqueness of Jesus is that God became human in Him; His divinity must be thought of as something of which human nature was capable of becoming at its highest. But this Divine Sonship, although universally potential, can be actually developed only by voluntary fellowship with the Father. The power to realize this ideal comes through a spiritual anointing from above, such as Jesus received at the Jordan. He is the miracle of history, since He alone has embodied perfectly the Logos of God; and only by becoming par-



takers of the Spirit transmitted by Jesus can we attain any measure of resemblance to Him. Few, if any, will venture to deny that Jesus carried human nature to its highest pitch of moral grandeur; and it is this pitch of elevation that shows us the perfection of qualities belonging both to God and man—love and holiness. There is no suggestion in all this that such thoughts dispel the mystery concerning Jesus; the problem of preëxistence and the mode of the *Kenosis* which constituted the initial step in this historic Incarnation are left untouched; we seek but to apprehend the meaning of the Divine anointing that Jesus received when He responded to John the Baptist's appeal. Although to some our accentuation of this crisis of the Holy Spirit's descent upon Jesus will seem to clothe the dogma of His Divinity in clouds, yet it is along this line of thought that the mind will perceive the humanness of that in Him which appears most superhuman. Jesus ever wrought as man in the might of the Divine Spirit.

3. The descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus was not intended to result merely in a paroxysm of emotion; rather did it signify a Divine equipment for the work of His ministry. It came as a summons from Heaven; it thrust new obligations upon Him; it cleaved His life asunder: henceforth, He could not resume the simple narrow duties of a village artizan. For years He had been preparing for this epoch; although with marvellous self-restraint He had waited for the voice which should lay a Divine imperative upon all His powers and consecrate Him for His life's mission, and at last it had come. But, according to three evangelists, the call He heard at the Jordan not only imposed a mighty task; it also strangely created new temptations. Believing Himself set apart as the Messiah, Jesus had to think out clearly in His own mind the true nature and functions of His office. The Spirit of God which had anointed Him drove Him into the wilderness by an irresistible impulse. "When Heaven is about to confer a great office on any man," said Mencius, "it first exercises his mind with suffering, and his sinews and bones with toil. It exposes his body to hunger and subjects him to extreme poverty. It confounds his undertakings. By all these methods it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature, and supplies his incompetencies."<sup>1</sup> These words of the remote Chinese sage

<sup>1</sup> *Mencius*, bk. vi., pt. ii., xv. 2.

aply describe the preparation that Jesus must perforce pass through, ere He can take up the duties of His exalted office.

But fascinating though the subject of the Temptation has proved, there is a perilous facility, in treating of it, that one may fall into self-contradiction, irreverence and futility. Let us at once avow our belief in the reality of the Temptation, while suspending judgement concerning the mode. "Evil did not lure him. There was no stamp of moral *défaillance* on that clear brow."<sup>1</sup> If such words could be said of the beloved Elmslie, with far intenser meaning and certainty may we apply them to Jesus. The Story of the Temptation reads almost as though it were a parable into which Jesus precipitated the moral trial of His inward life. It is so inherently, spiritually true that it could be interpreted as summing up, in the figure of forty days, the prolonged struggles of a whole life; or, indeed, it might be read as an apologue of universal history. But while this is so, there is a certain probability that Jesus would pass through a severer ordeal than ever before as He stepped from the Jordan into the desert. The evangelists, whencesoever they obtained their Temptation tradition, used it as a great moral lesson for all men, rather than as throwing any fresh light upon the history of Jesus Christ. In St. Mark's bare narrative, the Temptation is represented as going on all through the sojourn in the desert; while St. Matthew states that the three temptations were presented to Jesus after the completion of the forty days; and both these ideas are found in St. Luke's account, wherein the three temptations are presented as the climax of a long-continued struggle. St. John makes no mention of this moral conflict; and, by his enumeration of the sequence of the days, he almost excludes the possibility of this long struggle in the wilderness. Such an exclusion is avoided by supposing that the deputation from Jerusalem to the Baptist occurred several weeks after the authentication of Jesus as the Messiah. The omission of the Temptation from this Gospel was due to the dominating aim of the evangelist, which ever guided his selection of incidents:—"these things have been written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name."<sup>2</sup>

4. Those who interpret the Temptation story as a parable, escape the special difficulties arising out of the demonology belong-

<sup>1</sup> *Professor Elmslie, D.D.*, by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll.

<sup>2</sup> John xx. 30f.

ing to its Jewish framework. Judgement may be suspended over a matter so obscure as the personality of Satan and his demon emissaries; we know too little of the world of spirits to be able to indulge in dogmatic denial, or positive affirmation. The rationalism which hastily denied the credibility of Satan's existence and influence upon men has fallen out of vogue, and scholars are now turning with scientific calmness to the investigation of spiritualistic phenomena. While men who pass through certain moral experiences will not lightly reject belief in devils as a primitive superstition, it is to be remembered that the Gospel of God's grace is independent of belief in the personality of Satan. Jesus accepted Jewish ideas of psychology and of demoniacal possession, just as He adopted the astronomical beliefs of His age. At least it is open to discussion whether, in His various sayings about demons and their chief, Diabolus, and in His direct address to the evil spirits in cases of exorcism, He spoke authoritatively and with special trustworthy insight into the nature of evil, or whether He was not limited in this matter, as in others, by Jewish contemporary thought. Admitting, then, the legitimacy of agnosticism in this sphere, our attention is directed all the more intensely upon the mysterious dualism in man's life, and the tragic struggle between the flesh and the Spirit which even Jesus could not escape. And it is a fact of the biography of Jesus that, in the forces resident in the lower and therefore evil suggestions which visited Him, He imagined or actually perceived the assault of a personal enemy. An illustration of this is given in connection with Simon's confession at Cæsarea Philippi. When Jesus began to speak of His approaching Passion, the impetuous disciple took hold of Him and remonstrated, "This shall never be to Thee!" But Jesus turned with lightning-like rebuke, "Get thee behind Me, Satan."<sup>1</sup> In the unwitting exclamation of His blundering follower, Jesus felt the allurements proffered by a ruthless and malignant foe—a Satanic suggestion to evade the Cross and seize an earthly throne. No visible devil was there; but in the shock between the temptation which fell in with the instincts of the flesh and the stern imperative of conscience, Jesus felt the presence of His enemy.

5. It does not seem credible that this Temptation story is a *mythus* of the Church, as some have imagined; for the Apos-

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 32, 33; Matt. xvi. 22, 23.



tolie Church was fully convinced that Jesus was Divine—not only the subject of religious faith, but also the object of worship; and it is improbable that His worshippers would invent a fictitious temptation. The natural tendency of fancy, where it was unrestrained, would surely be to lift Jesus out of the conditions of human frailty, and to clothe Him with attributes of unassailable holiness and wisdom. That such a tradition of temptation should be told of Jesus, is a presumption in favour of its truth; for it could not have been along this line that romance would work in setting forth the Christ. There is ground for the verdict that it is from Christ Himself that the narrative comes; and He probably gave it to the disciples in much the same form as that in which we have it here.<sup>1</sup> St. Luke represents the Lord Jesus as the subject of continued assaults of evil. At the end of this trial in the desert the devil leaves Him only until another convenient season comes, and at the close of His ministry Jesus said to His disciples, “Ye are they who have continued (all through) with Me in My temptations” (*ἐν τοῖς πειρασμοῖς μου*).<sup>2</sup> How hard these sharp, recurrent crises of temptations were, may be felt in the exultant anticipation of His victory over the tempter’s final siege of His will—“the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.”<sup>3</sup> Such allusions to the dark passages of Christ’s inner experience make it seem plausible that all the temptations were summed up in a parabolic form for the instruction of His disciples.<sup>4</sup> While the temptations were real, the narrative is full of symbolism, Satan himself, the stones, the wing of the temple, the high mountain, are parts of the framework of the parable. It is, however, inherently probable that Jesus did actually meet and wrestle with evil immediately after His baptism; the leaven of John’s asceticism may have helped to confuse the issues presented by His own call; and for many days Jesus wandered in the wilderness amid the wild beasts, struggling to clarify His own conception of the nature of the Messianic work to which He

<sup>1</sup> Plummer, *Inter. Com. St. Luke*.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> John xiv. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Professor W. M. Ramsay expresses his belief that the story of the Temptation is parabolic. “The authority obviously is the account given by Himself to His disciples; and we are told that ‘without a parable spake He not to them.’ How far the details partake of the nature of a parable, intended to make transcendental truth intelligible to the simple fishermen, we cannot precisely tell, and no man ought to dogmatize. But no one can doubt as to the essential truth that lies under the narrative.” *The Education of Christ*, p. 31ff.

was divinely summoned. The populace looked for a Christ who would be their King; John foretold the coming of the Christ in judgement; but it was given to Jesus to think out and realize the second Isaiah's ideal of the Suffering Servant who should become very high. And it could not but be that such a revolution as this implied, was only attained after resolute and profound thought combined with self-renunciation.

6. Was it then possible for Jesus to sin? The bare suggestion comes to many a mind with a shock as something daringly irreverent. Our difficulty lies in the fact that Jesus has passed out of the category of historical statement into an abiding spiritual relationship with all men. He is not now one of the saints; He is divine. There is, therefore, an inherent difficulty in stripping our minds of beliefs which, in many instances, have grown after struggle with doubts, and which have been influenced by experience. It requires no little intellectual agility to get back to the Jesus of history, and see plainly the steps of His preparation. Yet this is demanded of us in our effort to reconstruct His earthly life; we must, for a time, look at Jesus not as an object of worship, but as Himself a subject of religious development. Even those who conceive of Him as simply human, and look upon the doctrine of His Divinity as an ecclesiastical figment, are not able to imagine that one who has given the world its highest ideal of holiness was Himself drawn aside by lust. Jesus was undoubtedly insensible to the squalid charms of low vices; on the other hand, His temptations, however refined, were real ones, and were repelled in human ways. Inasmuch as we value His humanity, we dare not say that He could not sin (*non potuit peccare*); but since He was made perfect through suffering, He was able not to sin (*potuit non peccare*). Only as He learned sympathy in the school of moral trial could He become fitted to be the Great High Priest of Humanity. However different from us in degree, still His life was essentially, perfectly human, and the tests to which He submitted touched Him in a living way at the very citadel of his consciousness. With this assurance of His genuine humanity, we must rest satisfied; the mystery of His personality forces us to be reticent; it is impossible for us to boldly answer "Yes" or "No" to the question concerning His peccability; nor should we be forced or allured into greater definiteness, so long as our knowledge remains so very

limited. In dealing with the temptation of Jesus, we have to face the two perils that meet us whenever we seek for an intellectual presentation of the Incarnation—viz., Docetism on the one hand, which reduces the struggle to a mere make-believe; and Naturalism, on the other, which insists upon eliminating the Divine Spirit from the phenomena of Christ's experience. It was a real conflict with evil in which Jesus engaged: whatever the form of the trial, He knew that He was wrestling with a force that was in antagonism to God. The tests to which He submitted strengthened His righteous will and consummated His moral union with the Divine. Noble souls are not immune from the liability to be tempted: the paradox of ethics is that elevation of purpose intensifies the trial, even while it releases the soul from bestial impulses; but the self-indulgent man scarcely feels aught of painful effort in choosing his way. Soul-culture involves a corresponding development of susceptibility to pain. Love is the highest, noblest spring of action, which sums up the whole hierarchy of good motives; yet, it is love itself that becomes a temptation to adopt morally ambiguous means in order to secure the well-being of the beloved. It is clear, then, that the elevation of the Manhood of Jesus did not free Him from the struggle with evil; in the wilderness He began a contest that ended on the Cross; Jesus dealt with evil in its essential principle as a world-force at variance with the will of God; and before He could achieve the reconciliation of God and the world, He had to bring His own humanity into complete harmony with the Divine Will.

7. The Spirit of God driveth (*ἐμβαλλει*) Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil: the struggle was full of passionate intensity; and through the symbolism Jesus used to set forth this experience, we dimly discern the giddy heights of emotion and dazzling ambitions that visited His soul at this crisis. The temptation may have begun with a contest between the ascetic ideal which He received from John and the dictates of His own judgement. The call of the Spirit to the Messianic office introduced a new factor into the serene depths of the Mind of Jesus; instantly the fires that had slumbered within Him leapt up. But to adjust Himself to His destiny, He had to conquer all uncertainties and fight against all the promptings of the flesh. Doubtless, anticipations of His Messiahship had flitted across His mind

in the previous years; but now the clear, certain call had come about which He could never doubt again. "Such transitions are ever full of pain: thus the eagle, when he moults, is sickly; and to attain his new beak must harshly dash off the old one upon the rocks."<sup>1</sup> The ancient prophets had sometimes felt, under the thrill of Divine inspiration, as if a Spirit had clutched them by the hair and carried them on strong pinions through the vast abysses of air. This inebriation of soul is due to those alien elements that struggle against the better self; and the conqueror's calm can be gained only through hours of storm and discord. The agony of Jesus may have been caused, in part at least, by His prior, partial acquiescence in the popular notions of a war-like Messiah, which clashed with the new conception, which came at His complete anointing with God's Spirit, of a mighty spiritual work which He had to undertake. Jesus had to determine, by His own free choice, which of these opposing ideals He would henceforth pursue; and in the struggle He realized that it was the decisive, though not the final, battle of true humanity against all that is lower than the highest. The conventional notion of the Messiah had in it elements of greatness, but it was limited, national and military; the ideal that Jesus set up was universal, humane and just. This was the definite choice of alternatives which Jesus made on the very threshold of His public ministry. The dovelike spirit that descended upon Him neither dissolved nor reconciled these antagonisms: rather did it throw them into severe and lucid antithesis, so that the election of one meant the absolute rejection of the other. Vague premonitions may have come to Jesus, as He made His choice of His purely spiritual mission, of that antagonism which would be aroused against Him in those various sects and parties which prided themselves upon their patriotism.

8. The Heavenly voice at the Jordan-side testified of the Divine filiation of Jesus; and the temptations that visited His mind turned upon His consciousness of being the Son of God; the first being a subtle suggestion that He should authenticate this Divine relationship by an arbitrary and egotistic exercise of power. He may at first have sought to imitate John's example of fasting, and the pangs of hunger may have been actually felt by Him, thus giving occasion for the temptation to work a miracle.

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, chap. vii.



The idea of Divine Sonship is one of the distinctive gifts of the Christian religion; it had been vaguely apprehended by other teachers, but Jesus realized it in his own consciousness, and communicated it to the world by His life. He did not depart from the norm of human nature and set up a quasi-independence of God, but He simply lived out the life of faith in the Heavenly Father. God gives life, and life at its highest can be imported and sustained only by the word of God. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that issues from the mouth of God." Being tempted to presume upon His consciousness of Divine Sonship, Jesus adopted the attitude of true manhood as one who received everything through the grace of the Heavenly Father. He was loyal to the ideal of humanity; He preferred the Cross to a faithless escape from suffering. Swift were the alternations of triumph and renewed conflict in the life of Jesus; the spiritual rapture of a Divine anointing gave place to an experience of agonizing trial. It has been suggested that, having become conscious of the call to be the Messiah, the suggestion came to Him that miraculous power was needed to substantiate His claim to that office; but He refused to ask for such a *charisma*. The form of the temptation will be interpreted variously by different minds, but certain essential features in Christ's manner of repelling it are clearly enough defined for all. Jesus demonstrated His trust in the sovereignty of God; that man's life in the Divine reign is not physical alone, but spiritual, needing to be nourished with the word of God. The true spirit of the anointed man is seen in that He who subsequently satisfied the hungry multitudes, now voluntarily submitted Himself to the pangs of hunger, trusting absolutely to the providence of the Heavenly Father.

9. The triumph over one form of temptation occasions a reaction from which springs a further trial;—having refused to distrust the goodness of His Father, He is next urged to make an irrational display of trust. Faith is in danger of being lured toward the gulf of fanaticism; He is tempted to expect from God an abnormal and extra-human display of Providence. While He is absorbed in the thought of the Messianic mission to which He is called, the suggestion arises that He should inaugurate His movement by the ostentation of over-faith—illustrated by the notion of plunging from some giddy height of a temple-wing. A

higher voice, however, counselled refusal to do aught that would violate the ordered course of human life, or endanger the spirit of filial submission to God's known laws. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Thus we see that even this Son of God was tempted to leap into the Pharisaic abyss of spiritual pride. Had Jesus yielded, He could never afterwards have said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Before He could teach the laws of the Kingdom, He realized them by perfect obedience;—having Himself walked in the way of God, He became able to discover it to man. From the very beginning, Jesus refused a religion based on miracle; the reign of God in man consisted not in physical, but in moral power—in righteousness and peace. His victory over this subtle temptation shows His acquiescence in the limitations and conditions of true humanity. Jesus definitely refused to lift Himself out of the normal state of man's dependence upon God, and also rejected every suggestion that the Son of God might presume upon the fact of the Heavenly Father's love for Him. Jesus sought and realized the true ideal of the life of man.

10. Yet another temptation, placed second by St. Luke, was the world's enticement to seek a kingdom based on ambition and pride—that is, to establish the Messianic reign by following the popular expectation. The Kingdom which John heralded as "at hand," was conceived by the Baptist as a renascent Israel—God's Kingdom, and therefore righteous; but its form was material, its scope national, and its rule despotic. The visionary sweep of such sovereignty invested in an earthly Zion had attractions for all dreamers; and besides, it harmonized with many of the ancient oracles read in the sacred books. One of the first demands, then, upon the thought of one who believed Himself called to be the Messiah, was for the formulation of Israel's true relation to the Gentiles. Could the Messianic rule over all nations be won save by violence? Herein was evinced the marvellous originality of Jesus: Judaism has had other claimants to the Messiahship, but no other like Him. Realizing Himself to be the Spiritual Son of God, He sought to avoid all earthly self-exaltation, and to secure His Kingdom by love and sacrifice. The choice of this ideal was not made without agony and doubt; the Temptation story reveals the inward conflict through which Jesus passed. He saw that outward pomp and military parade, alike with supremacy won by physical miracle, were essentially false,



contrary to the mind of God: perhaps the struggle was in the effort to see this, rather than in the rejection of the lower method when it had once been seen. Through His spiritual anointing, Jesus had become conscious of His kingly qualities and predestined sovereignty; but, as He reflected upon the external rôle of Messiahship suggested by John, He saw it was an unsubstantial mirage; the only real and abiding Empire of the Spirit must be founded on love and sacrifice. The life that Jesus elected to pursue had no meretricious display; it was simply the life of faith, and hope, and love. We cannot say that Jesus foresaw the fact of the Cross; but, in principle and method, He made in the desert His choice of the sacrificial way that was ultimately realized in the Tragedy of Calvary. Jesus made the absolute renunciation of self, beating down the appetites of the fleshly nature, crushing all the proud, rash impulses that were contrary to God's appointments, and rejecting all personal ambition. His meat and drink were to do the Will of God. "I think I understand somewhat of human nature," Napoleon is recorded to have said, "and I tell you all these [warlike heroes] were men and I am a man, but not one is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I founded great empires; but upon what did the creations of genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His Empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him." When the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, He was precipitated into a struggle against all the promptings and suggestions that sprang from the Spirit of His age. But the dove triumphed over the fierce, malignant forces of the world, and "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."



BOOK II  
THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE KINGDOM



## CHAPTER I

### THE MORNING STAR AND THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

I. JESUS OF NAZARETH and John the Baptist were contemporaries; yet while the ministry of Jesus began under the sanction of the great Baptizer, the latter became eclipsed by the spiritual splendour of Christ's abiding work. Lovers of paradox, however, still speak of John as the master, and of Jesus as his disciple. Their relationship and the mutual influence of the one upon the other are difficult to estimate, because He who came after John was before him. The tradition embodied in our Gospels represents the Baptist's work as introductory and subordinate to the ministry of Jesus: one baptized with the Spirit, the other with water. The incoherences of the Gospel narratives have provoked unimaginative critics to stigmatize them as historically unreliable. Had it not been for the testimony of Josephus to the profound impression made by John upon Israel, it is probable that the New Testament records would have been treated as a mist of popular rumour and untrustworthy products of the cycle of legends which Venus, the morning star, has evoked in many lands. For the New Testament resolutely treats John as the forerunner of the Light of the World, the herald of a greater luminary; indeed, he himself is said to have acknowledged the superiority of Jesus, and to have testified, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I." Josephus, however, prevents the critics from treating John as a mythological personage, convincing them that a concrete, real history lies behind the Gospel tradition, although he makes no mention whatever of the Baptist's Messianic hopes and predictions. This omission on the part of the Jewish historian is naturally sufficient, in the view of many, to negate all the affirmations of the Gospels. However, we ought to be grateful to Josephus for reassuring us concerning the historicity of John's appearance; and thus it ought not to be wholly impossible to reconstruct, out of the materials given, some fair conception of the Baptist's person and work. In attempting this task, though never so briefly,

our method must be one of impressionism, using the imagination to collect the *disjecta membra* which survive all criticism and integrate them anew into the framework of the whole. But while Jesus may be remembered by the work He did apart from John, the Baptist takes his place in our mental picture of the past, because of his connection with the beginnings of the ministry of Jesus.

2. Any attempt to understand the relationship between John and Jesus necessitates consideration of certain chronological data presented in the Gospels. Even if it were true that philosophy may ignore history, no student of the Christian religion can do so; for the ideas that dominate the New Testament came to men, not as naked abstractions, but clothed and dramatized in the events and experiences of real human lives. While it may be impossible to attain to chronological accuracy; still the delicate and difficult task of examining details and weighing historical evidence will result in a clearer apprehension of the great moments of evangelic history. Our general aim is to set out in bold relief the chief facts relating to the work of Jesus and John, and then to group our materials so that the sequences and acts assume an intelligible order. The majority of readers, however, feel but slight interest in the minutiae of research: they ask only for results; and we shall seek to meet this expectation as succinctly and clearly as possible. It is singularly unfortunate that St. Luke's sixfold attempt to define the date of John's appearance is rendered ineffectual through our ignorance as to whether he intended the fifteenth year of Tiberius to be counted from the death of Augustus, or from their association as joint-rulers. After an examination of the evidence, Sir William Ramsay has concluded that John appeared announcing the coming of Christ in the later months of the year A.D. 25, while some have dated the ministry of John about A.D. 27; and now Colonel Mackinlay offers good reasons for placing it as early as April in the same year as that suggested by Ramsay. The discussion still ranges between A.D. 25 and 27; happily the *terminus a quo* is of less importance than the order of sequence in the development of John's preaching ministry. The rumours of the Baptist's work may have synchronized with the awakening of new spiritual movements in the mind of Jesus;—may, in fact, have occasioned the changes in the life of our Lord. The Carpenter is conscious of that Wind of God



which bloweth where it listeth, and at the inward prompting of the Spirit He goes out to join the penitents by the Jordan-side.

3. It has already been suggested that the ascetic ideal of John together with the popular Messianism of that age caused Jesus to be plunged into prolonged mental struggle, as the Spirit led Him into a universal, spiritual and more genial conception of truth and of the Divine purpose. The next step is to try to understand the subsequent relationship between John and Jesus. Were we dependent solely upon the two first evangelists, we might imagine that Jesus waited until John was put in prison before He began an independent mission, since they say, "Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of God;"<sup>1</sup> but the Fourth Gospel gives us to understand that both ministries proceeded side by side for some time.<sup>2</sup> St. Luke's account of Christ's answer to the inquiry that John sent from Machærus, also discloses a considerable programme of work already accomplished.<sup>3</sup> With characteristic laconicism, St. Mark compresses into a single sentence all he has to say of the associated ministries of Jesus and John. For a time the Baptist's renown eclipsed the unobtrusive beginnings of Christ's work: still, it is evident that for a season they carried on separate, yet connected, missions in proximity to each other, which led to the notable dispute about fasting between their respective disciples.<sup>4</sup> The conviviality of Jesus, so offensively exhibited at the feast in Levi's house, may have given occasion for this public remonstrance, and, if this were so, several months had elapsed since Jesus began to preach. After the initial steps in Galilee, Jesus returned south to the Passover;<sup>5</sup> then tarried awhile in Judæa, where a propaganda of baptism was carried on at Ænon. The Baptist was far too magnanimous to feel envy; his disciples, however, did not restrain their jealousy. The Pharisees, foreseeing by this time that Jesus was destined to be a worse enemy to them than John himself, fanned the flame by invidious comparisons. Jesus was grieved by this petty rivalry, and to put an end to it turned to go north again. The episode of the plucking of the corn on the Sabbath-day, which occurred on this journey, while it foreshadows the final breach of Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Luke vii. 18-23.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 22-30.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. ix. 14-17.

<sup>5</sup> John iii. 22-30.

with contemporary orthodoxy, is precious to the chronologist, as giving a fixed point in the sequence of Christ's ministry. Although the first-fruits had been offered at the recent Passover, the corn-harvest had not yet been gathered in; and, as no mention is made of John's incarceration, we must suppose that he was still at liberty, although it must have been but a brief while—a few days at most—that remained for the continuance of his preaching. Thus, from those various data, we infer that the first six months of the ministry of Jesus overlapped the last six months of the work of John the Baptist.

4. The message of both these great preachers was summed up in the annunciation of the imminence of "the Kingdom"; but while in some measure they had a common aim, they used different methods and formed distinct communities. The conventional belief is that John conceived of himself simply as the forerunner of Jesus; but, if this were so, he ought not to have continued his work independently. The Gospels narrate the most explicit testimonials of John to Jesus, representing him to have borne witness to the incontrovertible sign of the Spirit received at His baptism; the fourth evangelist, in particular, declares that the Baptist pointed Jesus out to the multitudes as the Lamb of God, testifying also that although He was subsequent in time, He was marked by spiritual priority. It is astonishing, therefore, that John, instead of ceasing his separate ministry, continued as he had begun, and so formed a definite school characterized by ascetic discipline and a distinct liturgy;<sup>1</sup> and years after the Crucifixion—even during the apostolate of St. Paul—the disciples of John remained a sect ignorant of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> The later developments of the school of John with which Apollos became connected may be explained easily enough; but even the phenomena of John's personal ministry tend to dislocate traditional views of his movement. As the morning star heralds the dawn, so the Baptist led the way for Jesus, and historically we see that the work of John was subordinate to that of his great Successor. At the same time the facts recorded seem to show that, while John was a forerunner, he yet conceived of his own work on independent lines. In spite of this difficulty, it would be an egregious error to renounce the fragmentary traditions of the Gospels as unhistorical;

<sup>1</sup> Luke xi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xix. 2-3.

rather might we deem their very incoherence to be due to the evangelists' fidelity to the facts of history and the spiritual order. It is clear that John announced Jesus as God's servant, and threw his ægis over the beginnings of His ministry; it is equally plain that the Baptist did not think of himself as superseded by Jesus. If, with this perception in our minds, we proceed to indicate the probable sequence of the important events, using without hesitancy the suggestions derived from the idealized history in St. John's Gospel, we shall be able to form a conception of the work done between the feasts of the Tabernacles and of the Passover; and we shall admire more and more the greatness of John, who, seeing the growing fame of Jesus and feeling that his own star was setting, kept his mind unclouded, and free from ignoble suspicions and jealousies.

5. When Jesus came forth from the wilderness temptation, He possessed at last a clearly developed understanding of His Spiritual ministry, and a will of adamant after the conflict. Although His watchword was verbally identical with John's, His idea of the Kingdom was denationalized—human, spiritual and universal. Jesus has stripped Himself of the asceticism inculcated by John's example; He mingles with men socially, convivially, without fear of defilement. History has truly gauged the value of the two ministries: John came baptizing with water, but Jesus baptized men with the Spirit. It is a superficial and untrustworthy judgement that seeks to reverse these values, and attributes to John a greater influence because of his priority in time. To the Baptist belongs the honour of reviving the rôle of the prophet after it had lapsed for four hundred years, and his strenuous moral appeals aroused the sleeping conscience of the nation. Jesus, however, brought a larger, more spiritual ideal into our world; He made it possible to fulfil the Divine idea of humanity; He caused men to know God as their Father, and imparted a truly filial spirit to His followers. This statement is far from exhausting the significance of Christ's mission; but it is sufficient to show that the difference between Jesus and John was not merely one of words—rather of Spirit, aim and achievement. John baptized men unto repentance, seeking to detach them from sin and turn their hearts to God; Jesus anointed men with a Divine Spirit, augmenting the energies of right will in man's inward life.

6. The Synoptists give full acknowledgement of the incentive and sanction given by John the Baptist to Jesus; but the fourth evangelist, notwithstanding the haze of idealism that shimmers over his gospel, enables us to descry the historical fact that Jesus exercised a potent influence upon the stern mind of His fore-runner, causing at least a temporary deflection of John's thought from its customary orbit. The intercourse between the two prophets, whether it took place before or after the Temptation, imparted a new quality to the preaching of the Baptist; a new gentleness stole into John's character. As he contemplated Jesus, the oracles concerning Jehovah's Suffering Servant rose before his remembrance, and in a moment of triumphant insight he was caught out of himself and inspired to declare, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Subsequent theological reflection charged this ecstatic exclamation with meanings that made it seem impossible that John should have given it utterance. It should be remembered, however, that while we interpret the figure of the Lamb through the Cross, John himself may have applied it to Jesus because of His gentle, innocent, patient, enduring Spirit, which became manifest from the first. Since the disciples of Jesus Himself failed so utterly to realize the function of sacrifice in the mission of their Lord until the Crucifixion had been accomplished, it does seem incredible that John the Baptist should have outrun them all in his forecast of Christ's self-sacrificial ministry. But we know too little of the personal influence of Jesus upon John, and too little of the mystery of inspiration, to say that John could not have conceived of Jesus as the Lamb of God. There is a Divine Spirit which has access to human minds, which sometimes bears them forward in prophecy, imparting flashes of insight into the very heart of life's mystery, and which gives to the spoken word a completeness of meaning that the speaker himself could only imperfectly have apprehended. Thus, as every interpreter of Shakspeare knows full well, are we able to read into a great poet's language ideas and meanings that he never foresaw. The seer's vision may be limited by his age and standpoint, but the ray of light seen and pointed out by him has no detachment from its source; it blends with all the other rays, and, if followed back, it leads the eye to the very centre and source of light. The gentleness, patience and innocence of Jesus distinguished Him from all other men known to John, and so he designated Him as the Lamb of God.



John saw in Him a beam of the Eternal Beam; a ray of Divine lustre which leads up to the fountain-head of all Spiritual Light—the self-sacrifice of perfect love. The language he used was not new, though he spoke freshly of what he perceived; it was burdened with meanings and ideas of Israel's past and, like all the words of inspiration, insight and genius, conveyed infinitely more than the speaker may first have intended. Hearing John thus proclaim Jesus to be the Lamb of God, two of his disciples were attracted to Him, and followed Him with the belief that He would be God's Messiah. Having found in John a clear radiance as of the morning star, they now saw in Jesus all the glory of the rising sun. The Baptist, in all probability, gave a generous consent to the transferred discipleship of Andrew and John, seeking thus to help forward the aims of Jesus. Andrew sought out his brother Simon, and introduced to Jesus the most forceful personality of the disciple circle. Jesus, on His way northward, called Philip to accompany them, and Philip brought Nathanael. But we must not attribute to this first acquaintance the whole significance that attaches to their later discipleship; they had as yet no thought of abandoning their avocations, for at times they separated from Jesus to pursue their duties in connection with their homes and families; yet probably the events of later years never erased the first tender affections that this contact with Jesus aroused in their hearts.

7. In order that we may trace the subsequent relationship and mutual influence of these two great prophets of Israel, we shall be forced to refer, though never so briefly, to events that must be treated of more fully in succeeding chapters; but such repetition will be a light tax, if it enables us to see in clear light the two great epoch-making characters, Jesus and John. The two ministries are speedily differentiated by the miracle said to have been performed at Cana of Galilee. John has won the fuller appreciation of the modern mind, because he was no thaumaturgist. One of the earliest undertakings of Jesus of Nazareth was the systematic visitation of all the synagogues of Galilee. He may have foreseen that, sooner or later, these places of instruction would be shut against His teachings; but, by taking early advantage of them, He made His message of the imminence of God's Sovereignty verbally familiar to all the religious-minded Jews of His time.

Although our data of this part of Christ's ministry are so slender, we perceive He made no servile imitation of the Baptist's methods; He conceived and carried out His own plan; He imposed no stern regimen upon His followers; and, as a consequence of their conviviality and ceremonial laxity, not only was the antipathy of the Pharisees aroused, but an anxiety about it was shown by the ascetic disciples of John. When the matter is brought to the attention of Jesus, He almost gaily compares His relation to His disciples to the gladdening presence of a bridegroom with "the sons of the bridechamber"; He also lays down the principle of religious sincerity in life: fasting is the ritual of mourning, and grief can be expressed only upon occasions of sadness. Already we discern, beneath His expansive mood of joy, the unswerving strength of a disciplined leader, and with resolution He differentiates His movement from John's as something strong and new, which demands corresponding expressions and institutions. The Baptist's asceticism belonged to the old dispensation; Jesus inaugurated a new era, whose preëminent characteristic is a fresh feeling for humanity—a larger social righteousness. There is no profit in patching an old garment with unfulled cloth: the rent will only be made worse by such attempts; and no one will put new wine in old wineskins, since these would only burst and waste the wine. These parabolic utterances show clearly that, while Jesus restrained Himself in courtesy and affection toward John, yet He was fully aware of His own distinct and independent mission. Jesus had mastered His own thoughts and plans; there was no mark of immaturity in these early sayings; His doctrines were assured in His own mind, and He knew that He had something fresh and original to contribute to the weal of mankind. It is also plain that He conceived of His own office in a unique way; He was no servant standing on the same plane of consciousness as the prophets before Him, and as John the Baptist; He is the Anointed Son; He is the joy-creating Bridegroom.

8. About the time of the first Passover of Christ's ministry Jesus returned southward and took up His position at Ænon, near to John's centre, and His disciples baptized many converts after the manner of John himself. Such proximity aroused comparisons and contrasts between the two schools and their respective rites of purification. The discussion was natural, and



may have commenced without any strong feeling; but there were those around who were but too ready to point their arguments with jealousy, and it was said of Jesus, "all men come to Him." When the dispute was communicated to John, he evinced no pique or meanness; his answer consisted in the enunciation of the principle that, in all man's service for God, he "can receive nothing except it hath been given him from Heaven."

"All service ranks the same with God:  
If now, as formerly he trod  
Paradise, his presence fills  
Our earth, each only as God wills  
Can work: God's puppets, best and worst,  
Are we; there is no last nor first."<sup>1</sup>

It may be that someone had told the Baptist of the claim of Jesus to be the Bridegroom, and in answer he recalls his own testimony to the greatness of Jesus; he is among those who rejoice at the sound of His voice, and exclaims, "He must increase, but I must decrease."<sup>2</sup> John kept his mind unclouded by jealousy; he had neither begun nor continued his ministry at the prompting of personal ambition; he was willing to be "a voice"—no mere echo, but the stern voice of Israel's conscience. John bore witness of the dovelike spirit which he perceived resting on Jesus; he pointed to Him as God's Chosen Lamb, and magnanimously acknowledged that He was greater than himself. The morning star envies not the rising sun, but is content to fade away in the radiance of a gracious dawn. Jesus said of him after he had gone, "He was the lamp that burneth and shineth, and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light."<sup>3</sup> When it came to the knowledge of Jesus that the malignant Pharisees were striving to promote jealousy between John's disciples and His own, He at once left Ænon to go back to Galilee.

9. It was probably while Jesus was travelling northward, or very soon after, that Herod swiftly cut short the mission of the Baptist. Since Strauss preferred the story as it is related by Josephus,<sup>4</sup> we may quote it at first hand from that historian: "Now when many others came in crowds about him because they were greatly pleased by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into

<sup>1</sup> Browning, *Pippa Passes*.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 20-30; iv. 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> John v. 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Ant.*, xviii., 52.

his power and inclination to raise rebellion (for they seemed to do anything he might advise), thought it best by putting him to death to prevent any mischief he might cause and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Machærus, and there put to death." The Gospels say nothing of the political caution, but relate the story of a personal grudge. Herod Antipas was a licentious king: he lured his niece, Herodias, the wife of his own half-brother Philip to his own court. John is said to have reproved Herod "for all the evil things he had done," and to have boldly forbidden Herod's incestuous marriage, saying: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." The imprisonment seems not to have been so absolute but that John's disciples could visit him. Shut up in Machærus, it was inevitable that the Baptist's thoughts should revert to Jesus, and at every interview with his disciples John would ask concerning the work of this younger contemporary. In the gloom of Machærus, the gentler ideas of the dove and the Lamb passed away, and gave place to austere thoughts of the day of Jehovah's judgement. Thus overshadowed by these sombre conceptions, John listened with repugnance to the tales of the convivial habits of Jesus, and may have asked himself of what use would be the miraculous gifts shown by Him, if He became the boon companion of disreputable publicans and sinners. It seemed to the prisoner that Jesus was dallying with His Divine Mission; or perhaps He was only a subordinate agent in the preparation; and in his doubt he sent his disciples to ask his Nazarene Kinsman, "Art Thou the Coming One, or ought we to expect another?"

10. John the Baptist's question demands a glance at the tangle of Messianic hopes and preconceptions which belonged to that age. Sometimes the characteristic expectation that influenced so many Jewish writers is spoken of as though it were a single, simple phenomenon belonging to all Jews and conceived of by all alike; whereas the ideal assumed protean guises, and was moulded afresh by successive preachers. How it originated, how it sustained a patriotic optimism, and was strained of its lower elements and charged with the prophetic feeling of righteousness, can be perceived only by those who have studied the Old Testament in the light of its historical development. John was deeply influ-

enced by the teachings of older prophets, and the predominant characteristics of his preaching were fiery denunciations of sin and anticipations of judgement, although the hope of a baptism of the Holy Spirit was woven like a thread of gold in this dark background. Even a prophet's teaching may be marked by inconsistencies; in John's case we perceive a struggle to hold together incompatible ideas. Some critics fall into the facile error of making a prima-facie rejection of all evangelical elements in John's message to his age. Glancing backward, we perceive that some of the Baptist's predecessors had foretold the establishment of the Kingdom as though its only King were the invisible God; while others had spoken of agents predestined to bring in the divine reign of a "prophet like unto Moses," of "that prophet," of Elias or of Jeremiah; and some there were who anticipated the reign of a visible king. In St. John's day, there sometimes mingled with popular Messianism thoughts of a vague eschatology that sprang out of prophetic intuitions of the world's moral state and of Divine Judgement. Such thoughts as these were a part of the spiritual inheritance of John, and contributed the formulæ in which he could express his own flashing ethical insights. By a vision at the Jordan-side he became convinced that Jesus was divinely designated to be the Messenger of the Covenant—"the Great Refiner,"<sup>1</sup> John styled Him "the Coming One" (*ὁ ἐρχόμενος*),<sup>2</sup> and conceived Him to be the Preparer of God's reign, whose chief function would be to separate the wheat from the chaff, and to inflict judgement upon the impenitent. John neither offered new ideas for the constitution of the Kingdom nor formed any programme beyond the elementary conception that the Lord's Day of Judgement would be followed by a final restitution (*ἀποκατάστασις*).<sup>3</sup> The gloom of Machærus was sufficient to efface John's gentler mood, which intercourse with Jesus had induced, and to make him revert to the sterner ideal of prophecy. The bold spirit of John was chafed by captivity, and was as a mountain-eagle beating its wings against the prison-bars. Yet the most exquisite anguish he felt at this time seems to have been caused by the silence and non-intervention of Jesus. There came no Message! There was no attempt to deliver! Nay, worse still, John's disciples brought reports that Jesus had become the boon companion of immoral men and

<sup>1</sup> Mal. iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xi. 3; Luke vii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Acts i. 6.

women! John's sorrow, however, was no narrow, self-centred thing, but arose from the seeming contradiction by Jesus of the ideal of Him which the prisoner had cherished in harmony with ancient prophecy.

II. "Art Thou the Coming One, or ought we to expect another?" John's question was asked by his disciples before all the people. Some of those who heard it would be ready to repeat it as discrediting Jesus' ministry, and even to the friends of Jesus it may have brought a passing doubt. The Master calmly continued His discourse; perhaps He kept the messengers with Him all that day. At last He answered, "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he who shall find no occasion of stumbling in Me."<sup>1</sup> It need not vex us that we are uncertain whether Jesus spoke the language of metaphor, or literally recounted the physical miracles of His ministry; with Him, at least, the spiritual was ever supreme, and extraordinary occurrences were of little worth, if they failed to meet and to promote the mind of faith. These gentle ministries had already been narrated to John, and had left him impatient; yet they constitute Christ's only answer to men's prejudices and doubts. Had John known it, he was but repeating the old temptation that Jesus should mould His career to the popular, political expectations of a materialistic age. The answer of Jesus hints the pain He felt at being misunderstood; but this was a part of the price of spiritual superiority. He transcended His contemporaries—even John—and stood for humanity, the Peer of all the ages. He had to tread the wine-press alone.

"For none so lone on earth as he  
Whose way of thought is high and free,  
Beyond the mist, beyond the cloud,  
Beyond the clamour of the crowd,  
Moving, where Jesus trod,  
In the lone walk with God."<sup>2</sup>

12. It would be pleasing for us to know that the answer of Jesus gave light to the sad prophet in his dreary confinement; but the Gospels only relate that the tragedy of violent death soon

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Walter Smith, *The Bishop's Walk*, pt. iii.



ended the career of John. St. Mark states briefly that, on Herod's birthday, Salome by her brilliant dance secured the rash promise of the King, which was fulfilled by the execution of John the Baptist.<sup>1</sup> The mourning disciples "came and took up the corpse, and laid it in a tomb," then went and told Jesus. From this we infer that, if no reconciliation of John with the course pursued by Jesus had taken place, still there was no antagonism aroused. When the question had been answered, one of Jesus' own disciples may have called John a reed, an undecided man; but the Master defended him: the Baptist was no reed shaken by the wind, no smooth-tongued, well-dressed courtier, but one of the greatest of the prophets; although he was less than the least of those who are born into the Kingdom of Heaven. The defect in John's character was its violence: since his clarion call to prepare for the Kingdom, many had thought to bring in that Divine Reign by strategy and force. As Jesus described the Baptist, he was the Elijah of his time; and to him, as to the mighty Tishbite, the lesson had to be taught that Jehovah was not in the tempest, earthquake or fire, but in the still small voice of love. Since, therefore, a spirit of childlike grace has in it a diviner element than is revealed by the vehemence of passion, the greatest member of the old prophetic order was characterized by Jesus as inferior by spiritual birthright to the child of the New Kingdom. In God Himself, there is a holy resentment against sin; but man is too imperfect to show any adequate imitation of this Divine wrath. Jesus could be austere in the presence of pretence of any kind, but He was strangely pitiful of human failings, and chose the way of gentleness and self-sacrificing love to establish His Kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi. 17-30.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST MONTHS OF JESUS' MINISTRY

I. THE attempt to understand the mutual relations of John and Jesus necessarily resulted in an anticipation of, and cursory allusion to, events whose importance demands further attention. It will help toward an understanding of the whole work of Jesus, if we first make a synopsis of the inaugural months, and subsequently consider special aspects of His message, works, and relationship to His contemporaries. A breath of Divine inspiration was at that time passing over men's minds; the gaunt, rugged, stern man of the desert, with his austerities and rebukes, was a portent of change. His message sounded a mysterious crisis; the womb of time was felt to be big with Divine Judgement, and the Jewish people were moved with hopes and fears, believing that the day of Jehovah was imminent. Unlike some of the Oriental races who cherish dreams of a golden age which has vanished in a dim antiquity, Israel bore the morning star of Hope on her forehead, looking ever to the future for the nobler dispensation of God's providence. While they clothed Moses in legendary splendours so that, as Heine remarks, the mountain of Sinai is but a pedestal for the man who stood above the clouds and talked face to face with God, yet they dared to expect the coming of One greater than Moses himself. The traditions of David's reign were glorious in the minds of all patriotic Jews, and yet they believed a Son of David should achieve even greater renown for their race. Prophecy, poetry and patriotism were fused by the mighty genius who personified the nation as the Servant of Jehovah, and predicted that when the Servant was overcome, exiled, oppressed, he should renew his strength like the eagle, and transmute the failure of the race into spiritual triumphs. This noble hope awoke many echoes in the generations that followed, and thrilled the Jewish race with vivid expectancies of Divine visitations. Such tales of past greatness and predictions of a glorious restoration, with historic memories of heroic struggles for freedom, nestled in the heart of Israel

as sleeping instincts waiting to spring into activity whenever some great man appeared in the nation.

2. History shows that nations, like individuals, pass through periods of sleep; but during such times they often gather new energies for a further advance. When God's tocsin rings out, the dead levels are broken by the inrush of new forces; the thoughts of men appear to boil and ferment as though penetrated by a powerful leaven; the apathy that has weighed upon the heart like the frost of winter is thawed, and hot emotions are sent out like streams of lava. Such transitions from quiescence to storm, from stagnation to intensest activity, are frequently characterized by revolutionary terrors. When these birth-times arrive, God sends forth epoch-making men—teachers, founders of religion, anointed leaders—like Elijah, Confucius, Mohammed. Men like these are high-priests of the soul; they stand on the boundaries of the invisible as interpreters and Messiahs; often they become iconoclasts, who sweep away the false gods and illusions of their people; and yet at crucial moments they disappoint even those who hail them as leaders. When John came in Judæa, he stirred the conscience and heart of the Jewish race, and there were many who were willing to accept him as the Messiah; but with marvellous humility John pointed to Jesus as a greater Leader than himself, as one divinely predestined to bring in the Reign of God. Jesus appears to have felt the temptation offered by the political expectations of His race, but refused to take part in the fostering of revolution.

3. Externally there was but little in the lowly appearance of Jesus to account for the immeasurable influence of His Life; perhaps few great men have presented less temptation to the popular imagination for hero-worship than this Carpenter of Nazareth. We have seen how rapture and agony blended in His experience of the Divine call; how, driven by the Spirit, He wrestled with His new thoughts and high projects: but in the discipline of the years that had gone, will and character had been tempered so that He emerged from this struggle with His vision of the Father unblurred and an aim that never wavered. The transcendence of such a character as this has been the riddle of all successive time. Shall we call Him God or man? In seeking to understand the Gospels, it is well that our first

aim should be to learn all that they record of Jesus without theorizing about His Person; although, as we proceed, we are forced by the teaching and action of Jesus to consider Who and What He was. We shall be permitted to assume, from our general acquaintance with the Gospels, that Jesus was a man anointed and filled by a Divine Spirit, without, however, offering a definition of this conception. Two opposite temptations meet the students of this problem: they are prone to think of God as the Subject of the phenomena of Christ's earthly life, or they fall into a loose habit of treating the Divine Sonship of Jesus as a rhetorical or poetical metaphor. The true method of treatment is that of ethical insight rather than of metaphysical analysis. As a great agent in the world's history, Jesus said certain things and performed certain acts; and these have a great ethical value. In treating the inaugural period of His ministry, it will suffice to remember that He was ethically one with the Will of God—He lived consciously in reciprocity of thought and obedience with the Heavenly Father—and that He gave Himself up to follow the leading of the Divine Spirit. His manhood was like ours in its dependence and submission; unlike ours only in its perfect sinlessness and victorious triumph over all forms of selfishness. He ministered to men as the social and loving Man, and without ostentation or noise inaugurated the spiritual reality of the Reign of God. Dr. Knowling, in commenting on the Acts, states the unlikeness of Jesus to His contemporaries in a striking manner: "As we consider the characteristics of such men as Theudas and Judas, it is difficult to suppose that the age which produced them could have produced the Messiah of the Gospels. He is, in truth, the Anti-christ of Judaism. Instead of giving Himself out to be somebody, Jesus is meek and lowly of heart; instead of stirring revolt in Galilee, a burning furnace of sedition, His blessing is upon the peace-makers; instead of seeking a kingly crown, like Judas the Gaulonite, He withdraws from those who would take Him by force, and make Him a king; instead of preaching revolt and license in the name of liberty for merely selfish ends, He bade men render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; instead of defiantly bidding His followers to be in subjection to no man and inaugurating a policy of bloodshed and murder, He bade them remember that while One was their Master and Teacher, they all were brethren."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Expos. Gk. Test.*, Acts v. 57, *in loco*.

4. It is hardly likely that any critic will dispute the testimony of the New Testament, that "the sum and substance of the apostles' message to their fellow-countrymen" was that "Jesus is the Christ"; but it may be questioned whether this title was conferred upon Him by over-zealous adherents, or whether He adopted it Himself. One of the intellectual temptations following upon the emancipation of the mind from the fetters of traditional orthodoxy is to suppose that the Messianic rôle was ascribed to Jesus by others, and was not claimed by Himself—hence to consider His Christhood as external and non-essential. After a reëxamination of the Gospels I am convinced, however, that although Jesus refrained from making any pronounced claim to this title during the first months of His ministry, yet He acquiesced in its application to Him, and implied His right to it from the beginning. But this admission necessitates a reiteration of Knowling's statement, that Jesus was more like the Anti-christ of Judaism: the Christ He claimed to be differed radically from the Christ of popular imagination. He found the Christ-ideal steeped in the politics of a narrow patriotism, and He lifted it on to the plane of ethical and spiritual life, infusing into it the formative power of His own filial consciousness of man's Godward relation. That Jesus should have acquiesced at all in a title so misleading must have been the consequence of His insight into the real needs and spiritual aspirations that were disclosed even by the most illusive hopes of the popular Messianism. He looked upon it as the shell of a spiritual truth. Just as He told His disciples that John the Baptist was Elias (the only Elias for that age), so He knew that He Himself was the true Messiah—the only real Messiah God would send in that age. He was the desire of all nations. For Him and for us the *truth* of this Messianic ideal lay in the perfect consciousness of His Divine Sonship. Not being able to apprehend Jesus' higher point of view, but cherishing, long after they became acquainted with Him, the dream of a political Christ, the disciples were repeatedly disappointed in their Master, and at His Crucifixion they were subjected to the most cruel disillusionment. The belief in His resurrection, however, revived the idea of His Messiahship, but in a form more akin to His own conception, though still coloured by Jewish eschatology; they saw that His Messiahship consisted in His princely and soteriological relations with all mankind. When Christians now read the prophecies of the Messiah's com-



ing, and of the New Testament faith that Jesus fulfilled them, they instinctively drop all the temporalities and accidents of nationalism, and regard these oracles as expressions—noble with ignoble blended—of the soul's deep, universal, vague yearnings for Divine deliverance and succour. That is, we interpret the Mind of Christ through His own "Beatitudes," rather than through the distorting media of passionate Jewish patriotism and local prejudices.

5. The Method of Jesus, in quietly deposing the reigning ideals and setting up in a position of universal supremacy the conception that He realized in His own life, is one of the amazing disclosures made in the Gospels. He proceeded, from the time of His return from the wilderness temptation, along the simple, unpretentious lines of human goodness. Such an inauguration of the Kingdom, being altogether without violence and apocalyptic splendours, offended even John the Baptist, and left him unsatisfied. Nevertheless, those opening months of Christ's ministry marked a new beginning in human history. Tacitus tells of a legend that beyond the land of the Suiones the sun gives forth audible sounds in its rising, "sweeter than lutes and songs of birds"; and in sober fact, the work of Jesus constituted a day-spring from on high which filled the spiritual atmosphere of men's lives with gracious and stirring harmonies. Having once deliberately discarded all conventional dreams of what the Messiah should do, Jesus never wavered in His course, never retraced the steps of His purpose, never swerved from His own ideal, nor ever permitted popular clamour to divert His simple ministry of human goodness. He showed no natural impatience to secure the people's attachment; He calmly went about doing good; He renounced all worldly ambitions; and in spite of the Baptist's solicitation, firmly detached Himself from all political Messianism, being content to exemplify the true character of the Divine Son. That ministry was not fashioned by outward circumstances; it was performed under the compulsion of the Spirit. The Fourth Gospel reflects, quite truly, we believe, these characteristics of self-possession and autonomy. Jesus resisted all pressure toward premature action, and waited for "the hour" of Divine appointment; then at its signal, recognized at once in His sensitive spirit, He moved forward with stately yet simple dignity toward His goal. For lucidity of treatment we draw the inaugural months

of the Messiah's ministry apart from the later period; but no one should infer that there is any real "break" in the continuous development of His mission; from the beginning Jesus was dominated by a spirit of self-sacrifice and of Divine Sonship, which the tragedy of the Cross only threw into high relief. Thus, as we glance over the whole finished work, we become sympathetic with the special view of the fourth evangelist, who "regards the whole work of Christ as one, as the complete fulfilment of the Divine Counsel."

6. How, then, did Jesus appear to those first followers in that new, gracious dawn? They looked at Him through the mist of Messianism, and yet they saw that His face had caught a glorious radiance, and their own hearts leapt toward Him. In the Fourth Gospel we find the story of the wedding at Cana of Galilee, which, whether treated as history or legend, presents a symbolic frontispiece for the record of Christ's ministry. Many questions relating to the historical criticism of the Gospels remain as yet unsettled; and it remains open to the reader either to make the naïve assumption that all the incidents related are substantially veracious, or to weigh all available evidences and suspend judgment wherever the data are inadequate. I confess that I cannot bring my mind to acquiesce lightly in the theory that the fourth evangelist indulged in the free invention of incidents for the illustration of his theme, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." In such narratives as those of the miracle at Cana and of the raising of Lazarus, we take it for granted that he had some basis of fact to work upon. In the first-named story, there are details that are hard to understand: especially is it difficult to apprehend the exact ground of Mary's expectation that her Son would meet the sudden demand for wine; and this difficulty is but accentuated by the attitude and reply of Jesus. Had Mary only sought from Jesus the exercise of His tact and ability to extricate the host from embarrassment, it would have seemed natural; but the evangelist makes it appear that she wanted Him to perform a miracle. Taking the story as it stands, that it may make its own impression upon our minds, we may note that the unexpected arrival of Jesus with five friends perhaps helped to produce the failure of the bridegroom's wine supply. Whatever the nature of Mary's expectation concerning her Son, she manifests a trust in His sympathy and power. In His



answer, He disclaims any further right of fleshly relationship to control His conduct, and indicates that the initiative must henceforth come from a Divine source. By His presence at the wedding and His miracle, when so recently He had refused to satisfy His own hunger, Jesus appears to us as socially winsome and sympathetically powerful—a bright and joyous personality. “Without wine there is no joy,” runs the Jewish saying<sup>1</sup>; and this gives the key to the story—Jesus is the Joy-giver at life’s feast; water changes to wine at His word; nature is transfigured by His grace. The gladness of His mind was not, however, the spontaneity of nature’s harmony and fair proportions; it was distinctively an ethical beatitude, the resultant of temptation mastered, of self-conquest, of sorrow faced and transformed. His serenity is not the beautiful bloom of nature; nor is it even the superb scorn of Stoicism; it is the fine achievement of moral effort: it is at once a Divine endowment and an ethical attainment. Jesus was able to replenish the world’s wasted store of life’s wine, because already He had trodden the wine-press alone. Through meditation and heroic resolve, He plucked the grapes of wisdom and meditation; He had won perfection through suffering: hence, although He is the Joy-bringer, He offers men no cheap happiness, as many demagogues have done; He imparts His beatitude to such as learn of Him to be meek and lowly in heart—a lesson learnt only by bearing His yoke. Jesus assumed no “airs,” practised no religious asceticism, boasted of no spiritual ecstasies; He came into men’s lives as simply and grandly Human.

7. The fourth evangelist, who has done more than any other to give men an adequate conception of Christ’s inaugural ministry, places the incident of the cleansing of the temple in this period; but we think this order is topical, and due to the fact that in it the author found something concerning the purification of Divine worship that supplied a doctrine as necessary as that illustrated by the miracle at Cana. We follow Tatian in placing the temple-cleansing incident at the last Passover, and seek no harmony by the duplication of this vehement protest. Jesus appears to have taught and healed in Capernaum, and then to have used the first months of His ministry in visiting the synagogues of Galilee. We accept the suggestion of the late Dr. Bruce, that “there was

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Westcott, *in loco*.

such a thing as a systematic synagogue ministry,"<sup>1</sup> although this fact is too inadequately apprehended by most readers of the Gospels. "He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils." This was the deliberate policy of Jesus, planned by Him in all probability in His wilderness meditations; hence He would not dally, but, having preached in Capernaum, He presses on to other places: "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." We shall perceive, as we go on, far more of plan in the successive phases of Christ's mission than is often suspected by casual readers; the particular spheres and styles He adopted, the forms and developments, are not due solely to the popular demands; nor are they determined by the exigencies and contingencies that arise apart from His foresight. Jesus really appears to have planned His life's work so that He should touch every class, and yet prevent all unwise diffusion of effort, by giving special attention to the preparation of selected disciples. His design of accomplishing the early visitation of most of the synagogues was justified by events; for, after a few months, those congregations evinced such hostility to Him that it would have been almost impossible to have gone through the synagogues in the second year. This being so, several months of Messianic ministry must be intercalated between the departure from Capernaum and the return. Instead of imagining that St. Mark intended to represent Jesus as coming back to Capernaum after a few days,<sup>2</sup> let the punctuation be slightly changed and read, "And when He entered again into Capernaum, after some days it was noised that He was at home." He had gone away secretly<sup>3</sup> and had come back so unobtrusively, that not until several days had passed did it become generally known that He had returned. The months between these two points of time were filled with incessant labours of preaching and healing; but fewer details and definite facts are recorded of this first phase of His ministry than of any other. John the Baptist was looked upon by most as still the centre of the new movement, and for the most part the message of Jesus seemed the reiteration of the warning that "the Kingdom" was at hand. Gradually, however, popular attention was attracted to Jesus, and the differences between His message and method and those of John the Baptist became clear to all. His miracles

<sup>1</sup> *With Open Face*, chap. iv., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mark i. 38.

impressed men, and constrained them to consider both the character and claims of the worker.<sup>1</sup>

8. Of Christ's preaching generally, it may be said that it reflected His inmost Spirit and life. His sayings were simple, earnest and direct, and His discourses gleamed with pregnant aphorisms and beautiful similes. His manner had none of the clamorous stridency of the political agitator; He was quietly didactic. The Baptist's preaching was vehement and tumultuous as a mountain torrent; the sayings of Jesus were sparkling, limpid and spontaneous as a fountain springing amid rocks. His discourses seemed too natural to be premeditated, and breathed the aroma of religious poetry. During the years of His silence, He had accumulated treasures of highest wisdom, which, after being dammed back so long, shot forth at last in a crystal spring of purest religious thought. He refreshed the hot, tired hearts of the people: as they listened they detected a note of true distinction in His speech, and said of Him that He spake not as the scribes, but as one having authority. "Two weighty qualities" in His utterances were "popular intelligibility" and "impressive pregnancy." He used copious examples, parables, proverbs, and sententious sayings, aiming always at expressing His thought with the greatest clearness in the briefest compass.<sup>2</sup> Whether He had ever wrestled with intellectual doubts, or whether He had acquired His mastery of language by earlier attempts, is not known; we only know that, from the beginning of His Messianic ministry He moved in a circle of Spiritual Light, and the intuitions of His sensitive heart have proved the trustworthy revelation of God to myriads of men ever since. Perhaps we are more acutely conscious of life's mysteries and sorrows today than men were in Palestine, but across the abyss of incertitude the words of Jesus make a pathway of Light. Those who abandon this way inevitably lose themselves amid the dark labyrinths of speculation, and we find them striving to re-erect the fallen gods of fatality and chance, and make them pleasing by the shimmer of poetic thought and musical diction. We think the Galilean will conquer all such renaissance of paganism, and His words will continue to reverberate in the inmost sanctuary of man's soul with the ring of spiritual truth. This joyous, loving, social Messiah

<sup>1</sup> Mark i. 21-34, 35-45; ii. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup> Wendt, T. J., *The Teaching of Jesus*, p. 148 (Eng. trans.).

wedded His speech with works of power, and by the symbolism of His miracles sought to make His ultimate purpose plain: He banished fever and paralysis, and evoked in sensitive hearts a power of healing faith. He brought the evangel of Divine forgiveness and deliverance for the thralls of unloving egoism and evil lusts.

## CHAPTER III

### JESUS' MESSAGE OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

I. WHILE we distinguish between the inaugural and the later mission of Jesus, it must be remembered that His message was identical throughout, although different circumstances evoked an ever fuller and richer unfolding of its spiritual content. As already remarked, the Synoptists give but the slightest hint of Christ's work in Galilee prior to John's imprisonment; it is the second visit which they make prominent by their statement that "after John was given up, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of the Sovereignty of God." It is not improbable that, as we have conjectured, the removal of John brought emancipation to Christ's ministry, which was henceforth characterized by greater intensity and boldness. This second period of work in Galilee comprised events that transpired from the time that Jesus left Ænon to the return to the capital at the unnamed feast, and in our mental picture it must be framed between the famous cornfield episode and the informal trial of Jesus at Jerusalem. We can only enumerate the succession of some of the most impressive events of this period, such as the preaching of Jesus by the seashore,<sup>1</sup> the choice of the Twelve instituting the new apostolate, the teachings on the Mount, the healing of the centurion's servant, the raising of the widow's son at Nain, and the inquiry of John sent from the prison of Machærus which elicited Christ's programme of His own ministry. When this second period in Galilee began, Jesus still had the *entrée* of the synagogues, as the clerical hostility had not yet become pronounced. The record of His work shows that it was a continuation and an extension of the glad evangelism with which He began; He preached to the populace, gave special instruction to chosen followers, healed the sick and cast out devils.<sup>2</sup> It is neither within our scope nor is it our design to treat of each incident: "if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 7f.

<sup>2</sup> Mark i. 34; Matt. iv. 23.



contain the books that should be written." Our immediate aim is to apprehend the definite message of Jesus to His age concerning the "Reign of God," and, while leaving much of its spiritual content for treatment when we show Christ's special relationship to His disciples, to point out in this place that this "Watchword of the Kingdom" defined the aim of Jesus in the world, and provided a unifying principle for all His various teaching.

2. Few, if any, will now dispute that our translator's phrase, "the Kingdom of God," sums up one of the dominating conceptions of the Mind of Jesus. It would be mere pedantry on our part to exclude the word "kingdom," which has found a lodgement in all New Testament literature; yet it is well to remember that the chief idea of the Greek word is not the constitution or the territory, but rather the Reign of God. St. Matthew prefers the phrase, "the sovereignty of Heaven"; but the other Synoptists uniformly elect as their expression—"the sovereignty of God."<sup>1</sup> Various explanations have been offered for St. Matthew's preference—e.g., that it expressed more accurately the Aramaic term used by Jesus, or that reverence prompted the use of an impersonal term instead of the name God, or thirdly, because it denoted the Heavenly nature and goal of Christ's ideal. But this last "reference to the transcendental character of the object so designated" evinces a lack of familiarity with Jewish phraseology. Dalman tells us that the phrase "the Sovereignty of Heaven" is tantamount to "the Sovereignty of God"; though "it does not thence follow that all trace of the thought, that in the phrase the dwelling-place of God was being named instead of Him who was there enthroned, must have been obliterated."<sup>2</sup> However, it will aid us in our search for the spiritual content of Christ's dominating idea to remember that, save for two incidental references,<sup>3</sup> the Synoptic term for "the Kingdom" is in the Fourth Gospel entirely supplanted by a different phraseology. But upon careful examination we find that while St. John uses a different set of terms, yet by "life" and "eternal life" he means essentially the same thing as the Synoptists when they write of the Sovereignty of God. It is not incredible that Jesus Himself may have passed freely from one set of phrases to

<sup>1</sup> βασιλεία in Bibl. Gk. is the abstract noun of *κύριος*, and not of *βασιλεύς*.

<sup>2</sup> Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 55; xviii. 36.



another to connote various aspects of one reality; and since St. Mark identifies the entrance into life with admission into the reign of God, this conjecture becomes more plausible. The evangelists' choice of alternative phrases may have been determined as much by their own predilections as by the frequency of Christ's own repetition of them. Hence, "eternal life" radically means participation in the theocracy; and it is substantially the same thing, whether it be the entrance into the theocracy or into eternal life that is spoken of. A further example of the liberty of the apostles' choice of terms is found in their preference for the word "*ecclesia*" in the Epistles, which also denotes a theocracy—God's Sovereignty realized in an organized fellowship. Such variations in New Testament terminology, when rightly apprehended, free the mind from all slavery to words. By waiving such terms as "Kingdom" and "Church," and using the phrase "eternal life," St. John saves us alike from the mechanical views of ecclesiasticism and from identifying God's Sovereignty with contemporary phases of socialism. While the Kingdom must seek expression in organized communities, it is essentially spiritual—touching the inward and eternal life, which is God's gift to man in Christ; it is God's reign over man's whole life, and the Churches are of value as they mediate this Divine Sovereignty.

3. One of the most fruitful sources of perplexity is the mingling in the Gospels of elements of prophecy with the formulæ of Jewish apocalypse. The latter have appeared to many modern scholars as due to the misunderstanding by the disciples, of their Master's teaching, which in their reports became incrustated with Jewish dogmatism. On the other hand, some look upon those apocalyptic elements as survivals which the Mind of Jesus itself failed to slough off. But it is possible that these are imaginative and emotional expressions of certain great spiritual ideas which demand poetic and moral insight in us, and can never be interpreted at the foot of the letter. Perceiving this, we shall possess a clue to the tangle of ideas concerning the times and modes of the coming of God's Reign. Jesus spoke of the Sovereignty of God as "at hand," or "drawing near," as already in the world, or as coming some day in judgement and glory, while in His parables He sketches the processes of a gradual development. Such contrarieties of expression were not due to Christ's vacillation, nor to the incompleteness of His thought;

they suggest rather certain distinct *stadia* in the evolution of this moral ideal in the actual history of men. The Sovereignty of God was near indeed; it was already in the midst of Jesus and His disciples; it is spiritual and within man; it will leaven society, and it will be consummated in the final *parousia*. Our Lord spoke of it as a state of the heart attainable here and now; it was the new dispensation to be looked for and participated in by all His disciples: but again He described it as an eschatological order, an ideal of judgement and of felicitation belonging to the future age (*τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ*). We must understand these as representing different phases of one great spiritual concept in the Mind of Jesus, signifying in their several stages the realization of the earthly and Heavenly mission of Jesus. In subsequent chapters we shall seek to show something of the variegated wisdom of this great unifying thought of Jesus and the manifoldness of its application to human life: at this point it is our aim to mark simply that by this watchword Jesus gave pre-eminence to the honour of His Heavenly Father, showing that the will of God ought to be man's supreme Law. The Sovereignty of God is no gleaming, cold abstraction, but a veritable sun, sending out rays of spiritual and ethic truth applicable to human life under all conditions.<sup>1</sup>

4. This evangel of the Divine Sovereignty, then, is not some ghostly idea, wholly divorced from the history of the past; it is Israel's imperishable ideal of a theocracy transfigured by the Mind of Jesus. In His thought the two Jewish conceptions of "the Divine Lordship" and "the future age" coalesced and produced a new ideal destined to be the consolation of the entire world. Therefore, while the Sovereignty of God, like the new Jerusalem, comes down from the lustrous heavens, it is also a shoot from the dry stock of Judaism. The theocratic conception of the Jewish mind contained the seed of a universal faith, although before Jesus took up this ideal its fine gold of prophecy was mingled with the alloy of political ambitions. The Kings of Israel were called the "anointed of Jehovah"; and when the majesty of Israel's princes was trampled in the dust, an expectancy sprang up in Jewish minds that some Great "Anointed One" should come and restore the fallen kingdom. "In no part of the Old Testament does the Messiah appear as Himself the

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi. 34, *καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς πολλὰ.*

agent of redemption in virtue of His own proper power. The real Redeemer is God; the Messiah is the new King of the redeemed people."<sup>1</sup> In the preaching of John the Baptist, there was a spiritual revival of the idea of an Israel independent of fleshly descent from Abraham and made morally fit to realize God's Reign; but even John clothed his message in national forms. Jesus delivered this spiritual faith of the Divine Kingdom from its ancestral limitations and political swaddling-clothes. While John pointed Jesus out as the divinely appointed Vicegerent of God's purpose, he failed to understand His mission, confusing it with a narrow nationalism—patriotic and noble, but not compatible with the catholicity of Christ's Humanity. If John failed, it is hardly imaginable that his contemporaries should have showed truer insight; hence it happened that, for the most part, the Jewish people looked for an earthly Messianic king. The land seethed with revolt against Roman rule, and the hardy soldiers of the Empire were always ready to swoop down upon the beginnings of any political movement and crush its leaders. Unless we hold in view these conditions of Jewish and Roman life in the Palestine of Jesus' time, we shall not understand His silences, reserves and final boldness of utterance. A premature pronouncement upon His Messianic title would have stirred the enthusiasm of thousands of incipient rebels, and His movement would have been quenched in blood. And yet, as we trace the unfolding of His purpose and life, we find nothing in the end that was not implied in the beginning; the plan of His ministry, while superficially puzzling, even to so high a type of man as the Baptist, evinces the highest spiritual sagacity. Jesus was guilty of a sublime inconsistency; for, while He attached Himself to the popular expectation, He renounced all political and material ambition; He took up John's message that the Reign of God was at hand, but into it He breathed the inspiration of His own unique Sonship. He adopted the old prophetic watchword, but He gave to it a new meaning, stripping from the ideal all the accidents of national ambition.

5. With startling egoism Jesus differentiated His ministry in its relation to the Reign of God from the work of all predecessors. He was the door of the theocracy. Questions are often asked about the finality of the teaching of Jesus. The answer to such

<sup>1</sup>D. Costelli, quoted by Dalman.

questions must be largely determined by the self-consciousness of the Christ; He claimed that Moses and the Prophets had spoken of Him; He was the object of Israel's predictions and hopes, and He predicted the coming of no other, although He foretold His own return in glory. If we accept these features of His teaching, we must believe that Jesus Himself had an ultimate and final value for the Kingdom of God. He placed Himself in connection with the truths of the Old Covenant, not like Confucius in his relation to more ancient sages, as a transmitter simply, but as the fulfiller of the truth of the old order and creator of a new dispensation. Jesus was very reverent, yet His thought was essentially revolutionary. He refused to spend time in patching the old garment of Judaism; nor, to use His companion-figure, would He pour the wine of His new teaching into old dry skins, which would assuredly have burst in the fermentation which would inevitably follow. It is easy to overlook the greatness of Jesus, because of the very symmetry and harmony of His character: hence, in respect to His veneration for the old and His gracious tact in speaking of His forerunners, many writers miss the radical change He deliberately wrought in the thoughts of His disciples. John was the Elias who closed the old dispensation—the last of the prophets and the herald of the Anointed Son. The law and the Prophets continued until John, since that the Reign of God is preached.<sup>1</sup> The coming of Jesus constituted a new epoch; His ministry produced a great disruption, and made a boundary line in the world's history. He Himself said, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God approaches."<sup>2</sup> "It was not merely the content of the conception which forms the kernel of our Lord's teaching that was new and original, but also His application of the term, despite the fact that the phrase selected originally belonged to the religious vocabulary of the Jews. The theocracy about to make its entrance into the world was something more than a gratifying realization of the hopes entertained regarding it; it was a creative force bringing new ideas in its train."<sup>3</sup>

6. The Angel of the Annunciation is reported to have foretold that the new Son of David would restore the Kingdom. And when we trace the steps of the Messiah's ministry, from

<sup>1</sup> Luke xvi. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Mark i. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *The Words of Jesus*, p. 139.



His renunciation of worldly kingship in the wilderness right on to the tragedy on Calvary, it becomes apparent that all His acts and words were directed and controlled by His absorption in the realization of the Divine Sovereignty in man's life. It provided the motive for His itineration, and gave the theme of all His preaching. (με δεῖ . . . ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἀπεστάλμαι.<sup>1</sup>) The meaning Jesus attached to the old watchword came to Him in His consciousness of Divine Sonship; the Father reigned in His own soul, and He delighted to represent the Sovereign as "Father." There are critics who deprecate the transference of emphasis from the teaching to the Person of Jesus, yet as a matter of fact there is no divorce possible between these two; His ethic was but the unfolding of His own inward consciousness. The pre-eminence given to the Christ in the Apostolic Age did not involve any suppression of the supremacy of the Kingdom which Jesus had taught. As we follow out the ministry of Jesus, it will become ever plainer that the Kingdom was mediated through the consciousness of Jesus. The peculiar insistence upon His own Messiahship, in the later months of His ministry, was not due to the abnormal development of egoism, but to the removal of restraints that had sealed His lips at the beginning. He had evaded all popular allurements to the exercise of temporal power, and had refused to be made the people's King; but when His Spiritual Mission could no longer be imperilled by crude misunderstandings, He calmly asserted His claim to supremacy. Before Pilate, He asserted His Kingship—"for this end have I been born, and for this end am I come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."<sup>2</sup> Again in the judgement-hall Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world, then would my ministers strive that I should not be given over to the Jews, but now is my Kingdom not from hence." In making such claims to sovereignty, Jesus did not usurp any function that had not been given to Him; royal dignity had been committed to Him as the Son of Man. We cannot interpret such claims as the deposition of the Heavenly Father; Jesus spoke and acted as God's representative in the world of men. He felt Himself to be a projection of the Divine Will into our history; He was the Son of God, God's *alter ego*. While through His words there came a Divine declaration, we read the Divine *fiat* in all that He

<sup>1</sup> Luke iv. 43.

<sup>2</sup> John xviii. 37.



was and did and suffered; in Him the Divine Reign was established; but this involved the annulment of all that was contrary to God's Will; it cost conflict, agony and tragedy, and issued in Redemption.

7. The idea of God's Sovereignty which Jesus established bears some relation to the great order of the universe; it is not a detached dream, or a new Jerusalem built in the clouds; it is in vital connection with all the works of God. In the Cosmos, or order of Nature in time and space, God has manifested the supremacy of His mighty Will. Jesus possessed and breathed forth a poetic as well as a religious view of Nature; the lilies of the field, the wild birds of the air, the clouds, winds and all the myriad parts of Nature were looked upon by Him as under the immediate control of the Heavenly Father. His view was that the whole constituted a *providential* order; and some take it for granted that science has acted upon this naïve faith of Jesus as the Hammer of Thor. But while the Great Teacher threw His consciousness and thought of the world into the language of a prescientific age, and used earth and sky, bird and flower, as confirmatory of His own trust in the Sovereign Will of the Father, we shall do no more than justice in admitting that the fundamental thought of Jesus concerning the Reign of God has done more than any other doctrine of antiquity to aid the human mind in its task of unifying phenomena under the idea of Law. The power of human understanding is not commensurate with the vastness and mystery of Nature, and in the span of man's life Nature's order often bears little semblance to justice. But it is in the crown of the great processes of organic evolution—in the human soul—that we find a clue to the meaning of God's Reign. "The injustice of Nature," says Maeterlinck, "ends by becoming justice for the race; she has time before her, she can wait, her injustice is of her girth. But for us it is too overwhelming, and our days are too few. Let us be satisfied that Force should reign in the universe, but Equity in our heart."<sup>1</sup> History, in spite of its lapses and enigmas, shows a marked dramatic tendency toward the *dénouement*—spiritual, voluntary surrender to the Will of God—in which state men cease to be slaves and become sons of the theocracy (*οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας*). In broken and partial ways Israel's prophets had conceived of

<sup>1</sup> *The Buried Temple*, p. 55.

Jehovah as reigning in nature and history; but Jesus penetrated to the heart of this conception and universalized its application—boldly defined the aim of this Divine Sovereignty to be the salvation and eternal life of men. The seeming injustice that Maeterlinck attributes to the brevity of man's participation in Nature's order is balanced and rectified by the thought of Jesus that in His Father's house are many mansions. The "providential" order set forth in Christ's conception of God's Kingdom is not irrelevant to the scientific view of Nature; it is a deeper insight into the Spirit which creates Nature, and it is an ideal which can only be realized in history through the voluntary cooperation of man. Repentance is the rule of admission into the new theocracy—the detachment of the will from evil and the attachment of the inner personality to God in spiritual surrender.

8. Although the apocalyptic language ascribed to certain passages of the teaching of Jesus in regard to the Sovereignty of God is inherently distasteful to the modern mind, we must recognize that such a manner of speech enabled Jesus to set His ideal free from the trammels of nationalism. The depth and tenacity of the political hope among the Jews revealed themselves among the disciples, even on the way to Calvary; for they quarrelled, in their tragic failure to understand Jesus, about their respective merits to the highest places in the Kingdom. And even more remarkable is the fact that, after the resurrection, they questioned their Lord concerning His intention to restore the Kingdom to Israel. The originality of Christ's spiritual ideal placed Him in a pathetic isolation throughout His ministry. Jesus viewed the idea of God's Sovereignty in the light of His own regenerating ethic and, while recognizing it to be a real factor in this age, gave it a further eschatological reference. (*ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ* and *ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ*.)<sup>1</sup> The forgiveness of sins is a present grace of God's Sovereignty, and it is also a pledge of the eternal life. The "life," however, which will be consummated at the end of the age is a principle possessed now by all who receive the Reign of God. (*ἡ συντέλειαι τοῦ αἰῶνος*—Matthew.) The proclamation of this evangel caused confusion in minds enslaved by Jewish preconceptions. The Pharisees inquired when this Reign would come, imagining that it was contingent upon a visible constitution in Palestine. Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 30; Matt. xii. 32.

replied that it had come already—without pomp and undated by outward signs (*οὐ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως*). “If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has already come upon you.”<sup>1</sup> Neither isolation nor misunderstanding, neither temptation nor antagonism caused in Jesus aught of vacillation or incertitude. His doctrine, His noble ethic, His healing miracles, His undoing of death, His own self-sacrifice, were the expression of this dominating enthusiasm for the Kingdom. This Spiritual idealism burned at white heat in His mind. It was an eschatological ideal coloured with Jewish apocalypse, and it was equally prophetic and moral with its application in the present.

9. Further analysis of its content shows that the ethic of Heavenly citizenship<sup>2</sup> (*πολίτευμα*) could find expression only in the terms of filial relationship. The citizen is a son; the Sovereign is the Father. The essence of God's gift of eternal life is inward righteousness; the perception of this Divine Sovereignty is conditioned by one's birth from above, while entrance into it in the symbol of baptism involves renunciation of self-will and the reception of a quickening spirit from God. Outward possessions are hindrances; for it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. Penitent publicans and repentant harlots are eligible for spiritual citizenship, while self-righteous Pharisees are rejected. This theocracy is the *summum bonum*: for its sake it is wise to sacrifice everything that hinders one's attaining unto it; a maimed life in the Kingdom is preferable to sensuous ease outside. In the parables of Jesus, this state is represented as the pearl of great price—the hidden treasure of inestimable value, for which it would be reasonable to abandon everything else. But in their daily lives the Sons of the Kingdom are called upon to bear a cross, to drink a bitter cup, and to be baptized with suffering; in a word, each one reproduces the life of his Lord. On the other hand, within this Kingdom the curse of the world is transmuted into beatitude, and such experiences as poverty and hunger become sources of joy. Its laws are fulfilled by love, although the character of this love is marked by sweet severity, and the gate and way of it are described by Jesus as strait and narrow. In the theocracy the sole standard of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 28; Luke xvii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. iii. 20.

greatness is sacrificial service; and obedience to the Will of the Heavenly Father is the one proof of membership.

10. Although such a conception of the Kingdom will be acknowledged as beautiful, noble and strenuous, it is judged by some to carry in itself the peril of unbalanced subjectivity. Men must live their lives in the robust faith that the external, and seemingly trifling concerns of the natural order have moral value. If emphasis upon the inner springs of action should issue in stoic scorn, then faith will rightly be condemned as other-worldly. Tolstoy is an example of religious individualism tending to theoretic anarchy. The whole teaching of Jesus, however, contradicts the dream of the eremite; the theocracy is a moral community. While love must have God for its supreme Object, Jesus teaches us that he who loves not his brother cannot love the unseen God. The cross-bearing He inculcated is not an end in itself; it is for the ransom of souls; and the ministry He demands has for its aim the service of mankind. The Messiah predicts a final judgement, and the criterion of Christ will be the measure of our philanthropy. Jesus identified Himself with the lowliest; and, inasmuch as we help them, we minister to Him. The criticism has sometimes been made that the Society of Jesus had no economic relevance to the actual conditions of life. Our modern social democrats admire, yet pity Him, as an unpractical dreamer—"a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void His luminous wings in vain." "Jesus stood and stands alone, supreme over all other great religious reformers in everything that concerns the heart and the affections. But His intellectual grasp did not extend beyond the requirements of a single epoch."<sup>1</sup> The adequate answer to this criticism can be given only in our subsequent treatment of the whole teaching of Jesus. Meanwhile it may be pointed out that Jesus could not have dealt with politics, literature, art and education in those days without at once arousing the vengeance of the Roman power; and even could He have evaded its vigilance, any direct treatment of these important matters would have resulted in the enslavement of His timeless ideal of the Kingdom in the bonds of temporary and fugitive modes of human opinion. His seeming detachment from the circumference of life arose from His fidelity to the central principle of eternal life. Jesus did not

<sup>1</sup> Mazzini's *Collected Essays*, vol. v., p. 365.



scorn the objective side of life, but in the common facts He read an ideal significance; He accepted His nation's history as a channel of Divine revelation, and even imperilled His own spiritual conception by attaching it to the Jewish Messianic hope. Jesus did not advocate medical reforms or improved methods of sanitation, yet His miracles of healing declared the high value He put on physical health. He did not declare that democracy was the only legitimate form of government; nor did He evince an elementary acquaintance with the dire problems of political economy: yet, by His whole treatment and estimate of human life, He stamped as inherently evil every institution that enslaves the soul or degrades the individual. The relation of the theocracy to the outward order may be difficult to define; it may be hard to reconcile the antitheses of duty such as self-renunciation and self-realization; but the ideal of God's Sovereignty affords a regulative and creative principle of the best types of life; while by breathing into the world's heart His own Spirit, Jesus has done more than any other reformer to alleviate the ills of man's state, and to fill the life of His followers with positive good.

II. To sum up the various fragments of Christ's mighty conception, which have been but meagrely treated in the foregoing paragraphs, it may be said that Jesus represented the Kingdom of God as both present and militant, as future and triumphant. Modern authors have made manifest the contrariety of opinion concerning these two phases of our Lord's teaching. Wellhausen, for example, throws emphasis upon the deep and beautiful sayings about love and life, duty and faith toward God, and discards the apocalyptic elements as "the old garments of Judaism"; the younger Weiss adopts a view diametrically opposed, and makes the *Parousia* the most central and characteristic part of the teaching of Jesus, and leaves little if anything to relate the Kingdom to the actualities of the age. But if we accept the general accuracy of the Gospels, there need be no conflict between these different aspects; we see that Jesus sometimes taught that God's Reign had already come as a present fact, and also as a mighty factor in the producing of a new age. The two stadia are connected by the simple law of development. His Kingdom is as a mustard-seed growing in the midst of men, though the process be never so imperceptible. In man's attempt



to embody the new order in appropriate institutions and activities, evil and good will be inevitably blended; until the time of harvest, wheat and tares will grow together. Although these processes of development are gradual and of a spiritual character, there will be certain crises when Messiah will come in new accessions of power. While the feet of Jesus were planted on the firm ground of present actualities, His eyes penetrated the mists of the future, and in His vision the ultimate realization of His ideal was assured. He predicted a plurality of advents; one *parousia* was to be seen by some of His hearers before they died,<sup>1</sup> while another divine event is undated even in His own thought.<sup>2</sup> One advent will cause distress to the nations, and yet for His disciples it will be as a redemption (*ἀπολύτρωσις*).<sup>3</sup> The perspective of the future development of the Kingdom may have been blurred even in the vision of Jesus; but the goal gleamed afar in glorious certitude, and is set forth in the language of Jewish apocalypse. The attainment of a sound view of the teaching of Jesus which we are seeking, depends upon our looking steadily at His central principle while we grasp all the phases and applications of it in one whole. If we insist upon stripping away all the apocalyptic utterances as non-essential to the conception of Jesus, His doctrine is reduced to a torso—a beautiful fragment, which must be completed in our imagination. In the Gospels themselves, the realities of the Present are never allowed to melt into dreams of the Ideal; nor does Jesus ever lose His certainty of the future realization of His fair Ideal as He looks upon the struggling, conflicting experiences of the present time. His faith demanded the future; the consistency and impressiveness of His teaching depend upon the *Parousia*; He convinces us that the processes of renovation which were initiated by Him in Galilee must be completed beyond the bounds of mortal life.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xiii. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xxi. 25, 28, 31.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

I. THE preëminence of Jesus among men was acquired not only by the recognized authority of His teaching, but also in part by the remarkable character of His works. Whatever may be the modern feeling toward miracles, there can be no suppression of the fact that a miraculous element is inextricably blended with the narratives of our Gospels; and every attempt to separate the teaching of Jesus from these extraordinary activities reduces each Gospel to tattered fragments of tradition, which in the critical process have been deprived of vitality and cogency. "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the glad tidings preached to them." If it be objected that in these words Jesus was simply using an oriental habit of figurative speech, which must not be taken prosaically, our reply must be that, whether this saying be metaphoric or literal, the belief in the occurrence of miracles is not an embellishment, but a part of the very ground-plan of the Gospels. There is a criticism which, starting from the postulates of Naturalism, traverses the ground like a destroying fire, and leaves behind a trail of desolation. For this reason, if for no other, believers in the Gospels must themselves take up the legitimate task of criticism, and discriminate with uttermost frankness between the possible exaggerations of tradition and the core of historic fact. If we study the Gospels afresh with this purpose, it becomes apparent to us that the ancient writers lived under the influence of totally different conceptions of nature from those which influence modern thought. The scientific view of the world groups all phenomena into uniform classes, and explains them by universal laws. The revolution in thought brought about by such a conception was illustrated by a conversation I once had with a Confucian scholar in China. In explaining a passage in the Chinese classics to me, he recited, with naïve belief in its actual occurrence, an An-

dromeda-like legend, but instead of a Perseus coming to the victim's rescue, the sea-monster who ravaged a whole district and took toll of the most precious life was propitiated by a scholar, who, recognizing that there was a spirit, or *ling*, in all things, wrote a classic aphorism, and threw it into the water. The ravenous fish swallowed the writing and became a thrall to the wisdom of the sages, no more seeking to be satisfied by human sacrifice. Only after repeated interrogation could I be convinced that the myth was taken by my friend with most prosaic literalness. That Chinese scholar strangely enough helped me to understand John Henry Newman when he said, "I think it is impossible to withstand the evidence which is brought for the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples, or for the motion of the eyes of the pictures of the Madonna in the Roman States. . . . I firmly believe that the relics of the saints are doing innumerable miracles and graces daily. I firmly believe that before now saints have raised the dead to life, crossed the seas without vessels, multiplied grain and bread, cured incurable diseases, and stopped the operations of the laws of the universe in a multitude of ways." But for most men, to try to adopt such a mental attitude in the twentieth century would be to sin against reason, to fight against the light of our age. And further, if the mighty works of Jesus be coordinated with ecclesiastical legends and classic myths, the modern thinker will inevitably become incredulous of all miracles. There must be discrimination between the miracles of Jesus and the *Aberglaube* of legend, and such a primary differentiation is justified by our idea of Jesus Himself.

2. While we are repelled by the over-positiveness of those who declare that "miracles do not happen," the change of standpoint in viewing the phenomena of nature and history makes it incumbent upon us to explain how we can share in the scientific enlightenment of the age, and still accept the miraculous stories of the New Testament. There is room, however, even in the twentieth century, for humble agnosticism on the one hand and devout belief on the other; for, while science has driven back the shadow of the Great Unknown an inch or two, the cloud of mystery still encircles us. It is a fascinating conception that Nature is a closed system of matter and force operating according to mechanical laws without diminution or

increase of energy. "We have frequently seen," says Mr. Balfour, "in the history of thought that any development of the mechanical conception of the physical world gives an impulse to materialistic speculation. Now, if the goal to which, consciously or unconsciously, the modern physicist is pressing, be ever reached, the mechanical view of things will receive an extension and a completeness never before dreamed of. There would then in truth be only one natural science—namely, physics; and only one kind of explanation—namely, the dynamic."<sup>1</sup> Within such an imaginary circle miracle would be impossible, and so indeed would be human will; the strict conservatism of energy results only in physical necessity, and is incompatible with freedom unless we postulate dual and disconnected realms of action. The same writer goes on to say, "I believe that the very completeness and internal consistency of such a view of the physical world would establish its inadequacy. The very fact that within it there seemed no room for Spirit would convince mankind that Spirit must be invoked to explain it." But, when we reckon with all the factors, we perceive that Nature is not self-subsistent; it is related to thought, penetrated with Reason, as is shown by the discovery of its "laws"; and its phenomena are grouped into an intelligible order. There are still vast curves that sweep far out beyond our range of vision; and it is only by an act of faith that we can complete the circle of Nature. Its order expresses harmony, beauty and purpose, although no science has yet been able to set forth the *end* of this vast system. There is no rest for the sole of one's foot save in a spiritual interpretation of Nature; no new or refined materialism can obliterate altogether from our minds—

"The sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Balfour, *Essays and Addresses*, p. 321. In the same address ("The Nineteenth Century") the writer says, "I believe that the very completeness and internal consistency of such a view of the physical world (*i.e.* the mechanical view) would establish its inadequacy" (pp. 331-2).

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth.

Where, then, shall we find a point for reconciliation of these two necessary conceptions in the modern Christian mind—the Reign of Law and the miraculous operation of Jesus in our world? The transition from one realm of thought to the other is often accompanied by a sense of shock and a feeling of incoherence. The Rev. D. S. Cairns points out that the two realms can be viewed as co-existent and harmonious from the standpoint of teleology. Having quoted great authorities in science to show that morphology is wedded to teleology, he says: “Having thus granted that all evolutionary process converges upon some supreme end, we cannot arbitrarily arrest the further inquiry as to the nature of this end,” and arrives at the conclusion by a legitimate chain of reasoning that the world-process which science forecasts leads up to the ultimate ideal of a perfect form of human society.<sup>1</sup> “The Gospels also teach us that all God’s Providences converge upon a universal end, which is nothing else than the most perfect form of Society, a union of God and Humanity in the ‘Kingdom of God.’” The narrower teleology of individual providences can be integrated harmoniously in this wider teleology of the Kingdom of God, and room is given for the individualism of Christ’s Gospel. The elaboration of this argument might be a valuable achievement in another place, but here all we have sought is a hint as to the point of view that may be occupied by one who strives to be loyal to the Gospels, while he accepts as inevitable the scientific spirit of the age. The materialist seems to me to be like a gambler who at first insists upon playing with two dice, matter and force, and then surprises us by turning out three sixes; by sleight of hand or unconscious trick, he has introduced a third die called mind. But if we recognize the fact that mind is the *prius* of matter and force, and the cause of all order, we shall have no difficulty in acknowledging from the beginning a Hidden Purpose which has controlled all the myriad lines of development that converge upon the Ideal of Jesus—the Sovereignty of God in the world. If, then, we are brought to accept this spiritual point of view, much of our involuntary antagonism to miracles will melt away.

3. Our view of personality will shed light and influence upon our attitude toward the miracles of the Gospels. Our distinc-

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity in the Modern World*, p. 239.



tions between natural and supernatural are relative to the plane of vision; the higher necessarily appears supernatural to that which is below; but, if viewed from the apex, all things except sin and evil would be natural. Man in his present state is only imperfectly personal; within him is found a mind which should rule the body: he is of nature, and yet something there is in him above nature which "that democratic old monster," termed by St. Paul "the flesh," waits to pull down. In our personalities lie undeveloped potencies, and we are acutely aware of an inward disproportion: hence, if we call our present state *natural*, then the realization of our own ideal would be supernatural. If, then, there appeared in our history a perfect personality who actualized all human potentialities, and who was in such harmony with the will of God as to be truly the Divine Son, it might be expected that much of His activity would appear to us supernatural. Recollecting our own general impression of Jesus, we expect an elevation and distinction in His works which shall be congruous with our ideal of perfect personality. Kahler, however, warns us against the dogmatic assumption that we understand Christ's Nature: "The inner course of a sinless development is as inconceivable to us as life on the Sandwich Islands to a Laplander. How can we, who are so different from Him in the very roots of our being that we need to undergo a new birth in order to acquire an element of likeness to Him, pretend to apply human measures to His development, its stages and course?"<sup>1</sup> It is only by the idealization of what is best within our own personalities that we can approximate to any understanding of the life of Jesus. But while we recognize the note of transcendence in the Person of Jesus, we do not imagine Him to have been outside the scope of Nature's laws and forces. The phenomena of His outward life are conceived by us as harmonious with the true order of the universe, when viewed from the highest point of intelligence. The miracles reflect the wisdom and love of a perfect humanity. We use the term miracle to signify an unusual act above our capacity to perform, but which must be accordant with the laws and energies of God's whole universe. Miracle would be impossible if our standpoint were materialistic or thoroughly pantheistic; but in view of our spiritual interpretation of the world and our belief

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Somerville's *Cunningham Lectures, St. Paul's Conception of Christ*, p. 38.

in the transcendence of perfect personality it becomes quite credible. The miracles of Jesus are not arbitrary and capricious violations of the laws of the universe; they are rather parts of a wider and higher system. From the standpoint of the unique and preëminent character of Jesus, the miracles of the Gospels are natural; that is, they are harmonious with the Divine order of the world. Apart from the personality of Jesus, such events as the change of water into wine, the multiplication of loaves and fishes, and the raising of the dead, would be incredible; we should deem them the gross superstitions of inaccurate observers, or the legends of hero-worship. I frankly confess that, if the raising of the widow's son at Nain were attributed to Apollonius of Tyana, I should disbelieve it; but such is the impression made upon us by Jesus that we judge it credible as an expression of His pity and power. We do not accept the dictum that "however one may think concerning a miracle, it is impossible for historical science to believe in Christian miracle and to deny the non-Christian"; for we have recognized the overwhelming importance of the Personality of Jesus, Whose Will was in absolute oneness with the Will that maintains the universe. Such an idea of Jesus must not be taken as a proof of historical accuracy in all the narratives of the Gospels; but it serves to disarm us of embarrassing prejudices, which otherwise would prevent us from treating these writings with sufficient earnestness.

4. When we read carefully these miracle narratives, we discover certain naïve and incidental touches which assure us of the bona-fide character of the evangelists. For example, the hypothesis invented by the enemies of Jesus, that He cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub, shows beyond contradiction that He was successful in curing lunacy and mysterious nervous disorders. Again, being vexed by the rude inhospitality of the Samaritans at a village through which Jesus passed, the disciples desired Him to call down fire from Heaven to destroy them. This incidentally reveals two important things: first, that the disciples themselves believed in the power of Jesus to perform wonderful works; second, that, if the miracles of the Gospels had depended upon the inventiveness of over-fond disciples, they would have given stories of quite a different character from those recorded in the New Testament. As for Jesus Himself, although He did not repudiate the ability ascribed to Him of working

miracles, yet He disparaged their value as evidences of truth, and often refused "signs" when they were demanded by men morally unprepared to receive His doctrine. His relatives fain would have had Him display His power to overawe men into belief: "If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world"; and His enemies sneered at Him on the Cross, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." Thus it is placed beyond dispute that the contemporaries of Jesus, both His friends and His enemies, believed that He possessed and sometimes exercised the power of performing miracles; they may have been inaccurate observers, confused in their notions of causes and effects, prone to unconscious exaggerations; but it is incontrovertible that they believed in the reality of the miracles. We have passed the uncritical age when any claim can be made that the Gospels are inerrant; but in the acutest tests to which they may be subjected, the truthful intention of the witnesses must carry some weight even against modern prejudices. It is plain that the ministry of Jesus was not in word alone, but also in deeds of surpassing wonder.

5. The thought of the miracles having congruity with the Person of Jesus is helpful but inadequate; and as the reason will not rest in the inexplicable, men propose various hypotheses to account for the wonderful ministry of Christ. It has been suggested that, within the limits of His manhood, Jesus possessed the attributes of the Deity; omnipotence and omniscience belonged to Him, and found expression in such miracles as the feeding of the multitudes and raising of the dead. If, however, we take the whole of the records in the Gospels as our testimony, this assumption that omnipotence and omniscience were attributes of Jesus is not justified, and it involves us in logomachy and unending speculations. A more simple and yet more luminous explanation of miracles is surely to regard them as due to Christ's union with God. It is not necessary, at this stage of our inquiry, to make an exhaustive analysis of this unique characteristic of the consciousness of Jesus that He was one with the Father; for the present purpose it need only be considered as a moral harmony; Jesus felt an immediate dependence upon God's Spirit, and the deliberate and determined end of His life was to do the Will of Him that sent Him. His earliest recorded word is, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"

His dying exclamation was, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." If we pass to the less perfect experiences of other men, we find that their power over Nature reposes upon some kind of intellectual harmony between themselves and the Divine. This is the meaning of Lord Bacon's saying, "that man masters Nature by first obeying it." The power of the scientist to control and direct his experiments toward a reasonable issue depends upon his interpretation of laws and forces which express the mind of the creative Spirit. But, in the life of Jesus, we find a perfect realization of moral union with God; He read the expressions of the Divine Will with unique accuracy, and found His highest joy in obedience. It was His meat and drink to do that Will. The miraculous energy of Jesus had its source in this union of His Will with God's Will. He Himself spoke of the resurrection of Lazarus as an answer to prayer,<sup>1</sup> and, as Prof. P. Gardner has pointed out, prayer is the nerve and centre of this union—"the divine idea of the surrender of the will of man to the Will of God." Nicodemus acknowledged the mighty works of Jesus, and inferred that God was with Him.<sup>2</sup> St. Luke records that "the power of Jehovah was present with Him to heal,"<sup>3</sup> and affirms that the miracles of Jesus were wrought by "the finger of God." All the heights and depths of the human ideal were unveiled in Jesus; His moral union with the Father secured to Him the *pleroma* of the Divine Spirit. Doubtless Jesus shared in the unscientific illusions of His age; but all His works were stamped with the greatness of His moral character, and His unique activities were signs that God's Sovereignty was established in His Spirit. He Himself spoke of His "works" as imitations of the Father's ministry; "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." Although we can no longer accept Pascal's thought, that "the truth of a doctrine is to be judged by the miracles wrought to support it, and the reality of the miracles is to be judged by the doctrine," yet we look upon "all that Jesus began *both to do and to teach*" as one whole. Corroborations of His teaching came in His works of healing, and the sin of the Jews in rejecting their Messiah was correspondingly augmented by the fact that they beheld His life. The Master Himself, however, judged the evidential value of His miracles to be conditioned by the moral disposition of the witnesses. He refused to be thought of as a mere magician: "He sighed deeply

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 22.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Luke v. 17.



in His Spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.”<sup>1</sup> Yet while He refused to indulge a prurient and an insatiable thirst for signs, still He knew that to such as were morally fit, His mighty works would be tokens of His redeeming Will and attestations of His power on earth to forgive sin.

6. Before proceeding to make a brief synopsis of Christ's miracles, it may be well to remind ourselves that the *sine qua non* of all of them was *faith*, either as exercised by the sufferer or vicariously manifested in the friends. Unbelief obstructed the flow of His healing power: “He could do no mighty work there, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus understood the power of faith over mind and body, and by His union with God He evoked this moral activity in men's souls, and made them members of the Kingdom of Life. Faith is a great psychic force in the realm of personal life; and whether awakened or mediated by an idol, a spring, a picture of the Madonna, it can be utilized for the cure of diseases, as it has been at Lourdes and at “Bethshan.” Jesus was a great psychic force in our world; He deliberately took up the duty of awaking the faith of men, setting forth His own Person as the legitimate object of faith. The belief He claimed for His words was to dominate the conduct of His followers, and thus their faith was not merely a hypnotic response to the magnetic power of His Personality, but rather a moral obedience to His doctrine. But while He presented Himself in this manner, He ever aimed at revealing the beneficent power of God and at leading men to the Father. In the actual performance of His miracles, He did not confine Himself to one particular method: there were times when He uttered only a word of command, or laid His hand upon the sick person, or took up the symbols of clay and His own saliva to touch the blind eyes and silent tongue.<sup>3</sup> But whatever His methods, His sole aim was to establish a reciprocity of faith between the sufferers and Himself, and so to exert upon them all the Divine force resident in His own Person.

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Mark vi. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Mark vii. 31-37; viii. 2-26.



7. The miracles are all illustrative of the Kingdom that Jesus set up in the midst of men; they were not mere wonders, but "signs" of Divine grace, and for many minds proofs of a new creative force in the world's history. The prophet's anticipation was realized in Him: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Jesus shared the popular ideas about disease, and attributed many afflictions to the presence of demons in men. He rebuked the evil spirits who usurped the throne of human reason, and sought to silence their strange impulse to proclaim His Messianic title. Mental pathology is even yet hedged about by mystery, and dogmatic denials of demon-possession pass beyond the limits of ascertained knowledge. Even were there no such cases now, it would not disprove the demonology of the New Testament; since, at certain crises of history and under peculiar conditions of life, phenomena might arise quite different from what may come to pass at other times and in other places. Should it be that men may ultimately treat the New Testament hypothesis of "possession" as merely a temporary mode of thought, it will scarcely be doubted that Jesus wielded a remarkable healing power over minds vexed by aberrations and madness. Such a change in point of view would only accentuate the important distinction between the material of Christ's Revelation and the transitory forms of its expression. The expulsion of the evil spirit at Capernaum and the restoration of sanity to the demoniacs of Gadara, notwithstanding all the inconsistencies and discrepancies in the records, show us the place given by Jesus to health and reason in His understanding of God's Kingdom. "He came," says Dr. Hort, "as the Anointed King's Son to His own inheritance, to deliver a holy land and a holy people from invaders and usurpers, and to bind up the breaches and severances which they had wrought. Sometimes the intruders are diseases or disablements, sometimes they are sins, sometimes they are unclean spirits, in whose working disease and sin are inextricably blended. But in all cases the expulsion is called an act of saving or salvation; and it follows on that homage to the rightful Sovereign above, and to Him whom He has sent, which is called faith."<sup>1</sup> With this power to dispossess

<sup>1</sup> *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, p. 102.

men of evil spirits Jesus also had ability to impart His own pure spirit to those who believed in Him. Even leprosy, that most obstinate and malignant of diseases, yielded to His Will. He bore men's diseases, and when their wills joined with His, blindness passed into vision, and paralysis gave place to renewed health. Such was the influence of Jesus that involuntarily He cured a believing sufferer, and at His word the centurion's son, or servant, lying many miles away, was made whole.

8. While modern telepathy and hypnotism have tended to dissipate the rationalistic prejudice against Christ's healing ministry, no psychical research has been able to soften the shock of dismayed incredulity produced by the narratives of His power to raise the dead. The return of a soul from the realm of the dead, with an authentic message of continuing life, might be theoretically esteemed as contributing to man's well-being; but, as a matter of fact, few persons could be convinced of the reality of such a miracle save upon the most intimate and personal evidence. However strong, therefore, the evidences for the alleged cases of resuscitation in the Gospels, there will be felt even in devout minds a movement of insubordination to so great a miracle. The only credentials that will satisfy our understanding are those that we find in our impression of the person, aims and moral ascendancy exhibited in the character of Jesus. The Gospels ascribe three instances of resurrection to the exercise of His power. In the case of Jairus' daughter, however, the critic may legitimately object that Jesus Himself declared that the maid was not dead, but was sleeping, and that it is arbitrary to say that He used the term sleep as a metaphor. The second instance is that of the restoration of the widow's only son,<sup>1</sup> but some critics deem St. Luke's statement to be insufficient without other support. The third instance is that of the raising of Lazarus<sup>2</sup> after he had lain in the tomb four days—an event which, according to St. John, became the turning-point in the tragedy of Christ's public ministry. Those who dispute the authority of the Fourth Gospel are not likely to retain belief in this stupendous miracle; and some even of those who believe that it was written by the aged disciple, are inclined to treat the story of Lazarus as a parable. Of the extreme difficulty, even for those who believe in the miracles of Jesus, in finding

<sup>1</sup> Luke vii. 11-15.

<sup>2</sup> John xi.

a place for the interpolation of the Lazarus narrative we shall offer suggestions in the subsequent treatment of the Gospel chronology; here it may be noted that this miracle is often felt to be a burden rather than a support for faith. The direct evidence for the historicity of these three narratives is too slender to convince anyone who does not already believe in Jesus; but, where "faith" exists, these miracles are "signs" of the renewal and enlargement of man's life effected by the Mission of Jesus. Physical death is but an incident in the spirit's continuing life; God is the God of the living, not of the dead. In the Kingdom of God there can be no annihilation. Jesus came to save the souls of men, to restore life, to remove all evils that impair man's vitality, and to give the more abundant, eternal life. It was fitting, therefore, that besides healing diseases, weaknesses, losses of sight, and restoring the balance to the insane mind, He should also show His complete mastery over death by undoing death's work.

9. To complete this condensed synopsis of Christ's miracles, there must be some allusion made to the nature-wonders which find a record in the Gospels. What can be said of the stories of the sea, the remarkable draughts of fishes, and the feat of walking upon the waves; and of the creative marvels of the multiplication and transformation of food-stuffs? The naturalistic trend of modern speculation has driven men to adopt various expedients, such as the suggestion that the traditions of Christ's life gathered these marvels in the processes of oral transmission, or that perfectly natural phenomena have been metamorphosed into miracles. For example, in the miracle of walking on the sea, the nucleus of fact is that as the Master came swiftly around the bend of the lake it appeared in the twilight as though He came to the storm-tossed men across the waters. Thus we have that gracious parable of Christ's approach to His Church whenever she is threatened by the storms of persecution. Again, the Lord's curse of the barren fig-tree reads like a parable rather than the literal occurrence of such an incident. Many also treat the multiplication of the loaves and fishes as an exaggerated account of the magnanimity evoked by Jesus, under whose inspiration the crowds were lifted beyond the prudence of selfishness. Concerning such interpretations we may fearlessly say that, should they come at last universally to be accepted, the

dignity and value of the Person and Work of Jesus would not thereby be impaired. If many devout minds hesitate to accept such plausible suggestions, it is not from timidity, but from the naïve feeling which haunts them still, that the literal interpretation may be more true to the facts. After all that criticism has done, and in spite of our own inherent distaste for the marvellous, our impression of the fulness and variety of the life of the Son of Man makes even the most stupendous of the Gospel miracles appear credible in our eyes. There is nothing incongruous with our idea of Jesus that, in occasional single acts, He reminded men of the divine operations ever going on throughout Nature, and showed as by lightning flashes the presence of God working in and through Himself. Even the most marvellous "signs" emanated from compassion, and served to demonstrate the view of Jesus that Nature is subservient to the production of human personality. He shows us that Nature is not indifferent as to whether our intentions be good or evil; the miracles of Jesus show the alienation of Nature from man annulled, and matter itself reconciled to Spirit as means to end. In His hands the lower elements of the world became media for nourishing, preserving and expanding man's life; and by His care for the earthly life He sought to elicit a nobler life of loving obedience to the Sovereignty of God. As Dr. Hort says again, "Every word of His in public or private, every action, every look and gesture, was a lesson in the life. His acts of life-giving in the lower sphere were the foundation of His life-giving in the higher sphere. Everything which entered into earthly life became the image and vehicle of a divine grace, a spark of the eternal life." The miracles of Jesus were acted prophecies and parables of the salvation of the Kingdom of God; for in recognition of, and surrender to the Divine Reign, all lower joys and inferior necessities found new meaning, and touched by a higher principle of life the material things effloresced in spiritual realization and acquired sacramental values. We do not yet know the whole order of things we call Nature; to take in all her phenomena, our senses will require further extension of grasp; but already we perceive such mysterious capabilities in Nature's relation to Spirit, that we easily believe new potencies would be evoked by the operation of a morally perfect Will, such as Jesus attained unto in His public ministry.



## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST BREACH BETWEEN JESUS AND JUDAISM

I. OUR attempt to trace the beginnings of the ministry of Jesus has resulted in a fuller appreciation of the tremendous authority of His Person. No psychology has yet explained the origin and nature of the overwhelming influence wielded by Jesus upon His contemporaries. The noblest Humanitarian ideal ever offered to the world is found in Jesus; and yet, having said this, we are conscious of a further mystery in His Person. Comparisons instituted between Him and other religion-founders and social reformers, or moral philosophers, do not explain Jesus: neither do they alone demonstrate the preëminence of His teaching; they show rather that He differs from all others—that there is something transcendent in Him. While we have sought to give the fullest recognition to the influence of John the Baptist upon the incipient stages of our Lord's work, we are convinced that the ascetic prophet did not kindle the torch of Jesus; at most, he can only have precipitated the aspiring purpose of the Carpenter of Nazareth into definite action. When Jesus came forth from the desert, there was in His conduct a distinct effort to prevent any appearance of rivalry between John and Himself—a certain self-suppression out of deference to John's seniority and priority in the prophetic succession. Although He took up the identical message announced by John, yet He breathed into it an entirely new meaning. His thoughts were full-orbed; whatever may have been the character of His intellectual and spiritual discipline, Jesus evinced an already attained maturity and pleromatic wisdom from the time that He began to teach and preach in Galilee. The note of excellence in His teaching, felt through all the imperfect medium of written tradition, is its self-convincing quality. The sayings of Jesus establish themselves in the reason; they are like light flashing forth inherent truthfulness and inspiration. But this *authority* was not only the chief characteristic of His message about the Kingdom; it was also exhibited in a majestic ease and calmness in His exercise



of healing power. At His word, or touch, men recovered from their diseases. But even though conduct be considered as three-fourths of life, we can only look upon it as the exhibition of a character or personality. The influence of Jesus while it pervaded all His speech and action, was resident in, and emanated from, the indefinable quality of His Person. He threw a spell over men's minds; the Galileans turned toward Him with an instinctive recognition of His leadership. One would fain lift the veil, and see how Jesus acted upon men in His earlier years. We wonder if He drew them, as by a powerful magnetism, in that period of His silence. It may be, however, that this spiritual mastery over men was not attained until He received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Brief and fragmentary as are the Gospel records, we can see that Jesus excited the wonder, admiration, doubt, approval and then envy of the people. At first He attracted men generally; soon He drew to Himself a few persons with special affinities and potentialities; and then, alas! He began to repel certain men of distinction, and to excite their fear and dislike. He sifted men; He cleaved them asunder; He judged them involuntarily; they could not be neutral in His presence: those who were not for Him were against Him; those who were not against Him were for Him.

2. Already we have treated of the twofold message of Jesus concerning God's Reign and man's repentance; but behind these dominant thoughts, and breathing through them, we may now trace certain implied or expressed claims which drew men to follow Him, or stung them into revolt from His spiritual regnancy. Even if we accede to the position that Jesus made no explicit annunciation of His Christhood at the beginning of His mission, it is patent to all readers of the New Testament that the first disciples were drawn to Him by the simple fact that His authoritative bearing impressed them with the idea that He could be no other than God's Anointed. Something in His carriage, speech and action, created a widespread, incipient belief that He was the fulfiller of Israel's profoundest hopes. Although with hope there was doubtless a fear, which made its presence felt upon occasions, that He might not be all that His friends assumed. Jesus was Himself responsible for engendering this belief in His Messiahship; for the claim, if verbally unexpressed, was virtually made in His unique assumption of authority. Emerson com-

plained that the writings of historical Christianity "dwell with noxious exaggeration about the Person of Jesus."<sup>1</sup> If the language which describes Christ to Europe and America "paints a demi-god, as the Orientals or the Greeks would describe Osiris or Apollo," then as students of history this so-called "first defect of historical Christianity" must be attributed by us to Jesus Himself. He is the *fons et origo* of this apotheosis; therefore, it is in vain that we seek to escape this tendency to deification of the Founder of Christianity by appealing to Jesus Himself rather than to the churches. It is impossible to treat the Gospels as historical evidence in this matter, and yet reduce Jesus to the rôle of a prophet—to make Him out to be simply the pioneer, of faith, or the first interpreter of the laws of the Spirit. Some distinguished and not irreverent critics have represented Jesus Himself as undergoing a mental change in the later part of His career, so that His ministry is cleaved asunder as by a momentous revolution; by His Messianic pretension He breaks away from the prophetic succession and leaps upon a throne, as Dr. Martineau<sup>2</sup> described the transformation; His message was at the beginning one of self-abnegation, but in the end it was one of self-proclamation. Renewed and persistent study of the Gospels convinces one that this representation of a rupture in the movement of Christ's ministry and inward thought is based upon inadequate recognition of the implications of His earliest teaching and conduct; there is, in fact, the most vital continuity and the profoundest identity between the earlier and later phases of His work. From the first annunciation of the Kingdom, Jesus presented Himself not merely as the Interpreter of the Law, but as its Lord. Not only did He boldly treat the Rabbinic traditions as provisional or mere temporary accommodations, but with unexampled daring He put aside some of the literal obligations of the Law itself by showing the deeper Spirit that lay beneath the letter. Should it be pointed out that an Isaiah also could show a like freedom, as for instance when he said, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs, or of he-goats," etc., we at once differentiate between the function of the older prophets to interpret the Divine Order of

<sup>1</sup> Address to the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, 1838.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, vol. ii., 241.

life, and the fact that Jesus asserted Himself to be the supreme expression of the Divine Order and the Revelation of a final authority in all matters of spiritual life. This representation of the self-assertion of Jesus is based, not upon a few selected proof-texts of uncertain authority, but upon the whole trend and character of His ministry from its beginning to its close. Whether or not we are able to explain the uniqueness of Jesus; whether or not we have found a theory that can combine all the phenomena of His life, and set forth the moral and metaphysical grounds of His relationship with the Heavenly Father,—as historical students we are bound to be true to the facts, though they be incomprehensible to us. Our special undertaking at this stage is not, however, to propound theories about Him, but to take full cognizance of those facts of His ministry which brought about His rupture with the Scribes and Pharisees. It may be that we shall finally have to fall back upon the simple assumption—which cuts the Gordian knot—that in the Person of Jesus God has acted in a unique and climactic manner for the consummation of His redemptive self-revelation. Meanwhile, we observe that one of the features of Christ's ministry which shocked the clerical mind of that age, and resulted in controversy, conflict and tragedy, was the assertion by Jesus of an authority which seemed to encroach upon the prerogatives of Jehovah.

3. It was inevitable that the appearance of a great Spiritual Authority, such as Jesus claimed to be, should divide and sift men. While refusing to assume the military dictatorship which the popular imagination assigned to the Christhood, the Lamb of God was the Spiritual Warrior of humanity; He flung down the gage of battle and entered into conflict with all the evils and sins that afflict and disorder society. He made it plain that there is no compatibility between His Kingdom and sin; the sin of the world was the enemy of God's Sovereignty. It was in His special treatment of this problem of sin that there were disclosed the serious differences between Jesus and the theologians and ecclesiastics of that age. His whole view of sin in its origin in the evil heart and rebellious will, and in the scope of its malignant opposition, can only appear in the completion of our study, when the contrast of His righteousness with the world's enmity to God has been looked at from the standpoint of the Cross. The note of His teaching which distinguished it from all that

had gone before was its intense inwardness; while Jesus recognized as fully as any moralist or social reformer the dire objective ills of life, His emphasis fell almost exclusively upon the subjective and central motive of all human conduct. With Him it was largely a question of the will; and in this we shall find the principle of His differentiation in the treatment of sinners. There was ever a strange gentleness in His dealing with the poor, weak victims of passion and lust, and a contrary sternness in His view of the sins of the mind, such as pride and insincerity, so palpably manifest in the attitude of the Pharisees towards Himself. When we take the whole ministry of Jesus as a complete act of God in human history, we see the validity of the apostolic view of His work as the definite Divine dealing with sin as an enemy to the Kingdom, and something that had to be faced and overcome by the champion of the righteousness and trustworthy order of God in the world. We mention this larger view in order to prevent an unbalanced emphasis upon a vital but fragmentary insight which must now be set forth. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus proclaimed a full remission (*ἄφεσις*) of men's sins, which carried with it the impulse to start anew. The forgiveness of sins was one of the first conditions essential to the establishment of God's Sovereignty. His annunciation of this evangel did not spring from light-heartedness, or from a sentimental and superficial optimism which looked upon sin as negative, shadowy and unreal. Jesus never lacked in ethical seriousness. "For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed—fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness."<sup>1</sup> Forgiveness, therefore, was not easy; although so freely proclaimed, it was bestowed at great cost. It is the miracle of miracles! The scribes were so far right in their criticism of Christ's evangel that forgiveness must be the prerogative of God only, for they recognized in it something of a mystery. Even Jesus Himself expressed His consciousness that there was that in the forgiveness of sin which made it more difficult to pronounce absolution than to speak the healing word to the victim of palsy.<sup>2</sup> The demonstration of His power over physical disease left the scribes unconvinced of His authority to forgive sins; to them such announcement savoured of blasphemy. Such a message of *ἄφεσις* carried implications of authority

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 21, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ii. 1-12.



which they were not willing to ascribe to Jesus. Herein lay the first cause of alienation between Jesus and the religious leaders of the people; and their criticism of His assumption of Divine authority must evoke sympathetic response in all minds that are prepossessed by a purely humanitarian conception of Jesus.

4. Our next step must be an attempt to explain briefly the nature of the ceaseless strife between Jesus and the Pharisees. Dr. Stalker<sup>1</sup> has rightly reminded us that the Prince of Peace was a great controversialist, and that the evidence of this phase of His ministry looms far more largely in the Gospels than is often recognized. The characteristic of modern thought is *reconciliation*; we are seeking for a new synthesis of all the partial truths and broken insights of men. This fact, together with the hurtful history of many a past controversy in the Christian Church, has naturally resulted in widespread deprecation of theological conflict. But the note of authority which we find in Christ's character inevitably expressed itself in a strong antagonism to all that was alien to His way of thought. The "Gentle Jesus" of our hymns must not usurp the true portrait in the Gospels of a Perfect Character. There is always a capacity for fierce anger in a perfectly developed soul. Sympathy must never be cultivated at the expense of principle. Dr. Forsyth<sup>2</sup> has fitly said, "There is a worse thing than the temper and abuse of controversy, and that is the mawkish sweetness and maudlin piety of the people who are everybody's brothers and can stand up to none." The Kingdom which Christ came to establish was of righteousness and peace, but not peace without righteousness. When one recalls the genius of Pharisaic Judaism with its everlasting insistence upon external ceremonies, which so often issued in the neglect of the weightier matters of the law, he sees that such a One as Jesus could not possibly escape controversy with its representatives. The vital and spiritual principle of true religion was at stake: therefore, Jesus did not hesitate to become the aggressor in this conflict; and disputes arose out of three definite questions of traditional religious life—viz. the weekly fasting, the rites of purification, and the rules of the Sabbath. But these outward forms only provided the terms of the controversy; the real point at issue was, with Jesus, the very spirit and

<sup>1</sup> *Imago Christi*, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> *Rome, Reform and Reaction*, p. 15.



aim of man's recognition of his multiform relations to God. He saw clearly, more clearly than His adversaries, the infinite value of a living, free spiritual religion; and to this ideal Pharisaic conservatism was as hostile, in the view of Jesus, as the very demons who usurped possession of men's reason and bodies. But if the evil which confronted Him was as a strong man armed, Jesus entered into the controversy with the consciousness that a strength was inherent in Him to bind the strong man and spoil his house. He had brought a new wine that could not be contained in the old, dried, cracked skins of external ceremonial. In the instance of the dispute about purification—the washing of hands, etc.—Jesus saw that the peril lay in an external rite which had lost its symbolic meanings.<sup>1</sup> Again in the matter of fasting, Rabbinic tradition had supplemented the one great fast of the Day of Atonement, inculcated in the Torah, by weekly abstinence on Mondays and Thursdays; but the result of this multiplication of fasts was to rob them of their spiritual value, to minister to religious vanity and insincerity, and to foster the radically false idea of bartering merit with God. To form a correct and ample conception of Jesus, therefore, we must reckon with this strong, controversial element in His ministry, and acknowledge that from the beginning He showed a wonderful prescience concerning His real foes, and took up an uncompromising attitude of opposition to formalism, while in the course of the conflict He evinced marvellous calmness, certainty and authority.

5. The differences between Jesus and contemporary Judaism found their acutest and most vehement expression in the particular dispute about the Sabbath-day. The Jewish views of the Sabbath are so well-known that it is needless to reiterate them; the bewildering thing in the Gospels is that Jesus should seem to undermine the orthodox Sabbatarian ideal. His freedom from conventional restraints may easily be misunderstood and caricatured. Let it be accepted as a certitude that while Jesus resolutely attacked external and conventional usages, He never once thought of annulling the Sabbath itself. The Sabbath institution rested upon the distinct teaching of the Torah, and Jesus accepted it as a part of the Divine economy for the teaching and salvation of men. He sought to detach the essential from the accidental; He waved aside Pharisaic prejudices concerning it, but His

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 1-23.

synagogue ministry itself is a refutation of the idea that He abrogated the Divine right and human obligation expressed in the institution itself. At first Jesus hoped to win the Pharisees to the acceptance of His point of view; and in His justification of His disciples, when they plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath-day, He showed that He was possessed of a new dialectic, and could furnish strong and cogent arguments in defence of His own views and conduct. The mind of Jesus disclosed itself as able to penetrate to the core of all intricacies and seize upon the central and abiding principle or general notion which had expressed itself in symbols and rites. He could also rapidly arrange His acquired stores of Old Testament learning and marshal His thoughts in an ordered and convincing manner. There was also a quality of supreme daring in His free Spirit, although at no point did He give place to license. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: so that the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath." After meditating upon the title, "Son of Man," I cannot apply it indiscriminately to all men; it is peculiar to Jesus, because of His unique humanity; it breathes His Messianic self-consciousness, and bespeaks an authority which awes the spirits of men into surrender to Him. When other men possess the energy, decisiveness, and authority of personality combined with the clear spiritual vision and philosophic grasp of general principles, together with an ethic both broad and exalted as that of Jesus, they may claim to be even lords of the Sabbath; in the meantime let us acknowledge that He is *the* Son of Man, and worthy to be called "our Lord."

6. If this representation of the history be correct, then the conflict between the Pharisees and Jesus arose from a diametrical opposition of temper and spirit. It was not simply that they were jealous of the growing influence of Jesus, of the popularity won by His healing miracles; it was rather the collision of tempers, which could find no point for reconciliation. The system of Pharisaism too often hardened its votaries into an attitude which sacrificed humanity to ritual—into an arid, intellectual dogmatism which was the bondage of the Spirit. Jesus, however, in whom we find elements of transcendental authority was essentially humanitarian in His outlook and practice, and would not for one moment tolerate the abandonment of the humble pieties and domestic duties in the name of a creed or

ritual. The culmination of such a controversy could not be delayed very long, and it was destined to cut short Christ's synagogue ministry and to make it advisable for Him to seek a different sphere of activity. As we read St. Mark's narrative of the healing of the man with the withered hand,<sup>1</sup> the thought is suggested that the Pharisees had planned and prearranged the scene in the synagogue, in order to bring matters to a crisis and make Christ's breach with Judaism as public and glaring as possible. It was such a challenge as Jesus could not hesitate to accept, and, with characteristic and terrible directness which attests His intellectual power, He threw the whole controversy upon the Pharisees by His stern question, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill?" A touch of imaginative sympathy recreates the scene, and we see transacted over again the strange duel, and feel the thrill of overwhelming emotion in Christ's question. It was a moment of stress and strain, an hour of storm, a tremendous battle between two ideals of religion. There could be no compromise. Jesus gave up the hope of winning His opponents, and turned round to look on them with anger and grief at their invincible hardness, which they misnamed religion. The miraculous restoration of the man's withered hand on that Sabbath-day brought about the definite rupture of Jesus with the religious authorities in Galilee. "This event, according to Mark, was the parting of the ways. The religious leaders decide to get rid of Jesus by the help of the Herodian government; while Jesus, on the other hand, begins to constitute His followers into an organization which was destined to develop into the Christian Church. He no longer preaches in the synagogues, save once (and that unsuccessfully) at His own home at Nazareth, and for the remainder of His ministry His main efforts are directed toward preparing His disciples for the trials that are in store for Him and them."<sup>2</sup>

7. The breach between Jesus and the Pharisees was widened by His disregard of conventional class distinctions. This strange Messiah shocked all His narrow-minded contemporaries by the social abandon He exhibited; they could not understand such pity and love. In His eyes there shone an appealing grace which

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 1-6.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Burkett, *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 69.

strangely moved the hearts of all who were ostracized by the respectable classes. He showed no scorn or hauteur toward the vicious, the vagrants, and the diseased; He came to seek and save. The classic instance of His bonhomie and bohemian habits is that of the farewell feast which followed the call of Matthew.<sup>1</sup> Seeing that His Synagogue Mission must be terminated, Jesus deliberately set Himself to win the excommunicated. Such companionship caused no embarrassment in Jesus; but the Pharisees were shocked by this further outrage upon conventional ideas of life; they failed to understand His religion of Perfect Love; there was engendered in their minds, as they looked on, a sour suspicion, and they stigmatized Him as "the friend of publicans and sinners." He did not blush at being "caught" in the company of fallen men and women, but uttered the *apologia pro vita sua*, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." When He heard that His followers were upbraided for not observing the fasts, He said that as the Bridegroom was with them, they could not mourn. He looked upon His critics and foes, as one might look upon naughty, quarrelsome children who were at cross-purposes, discontented with their games of mock funerals, and unwilling to join in play at weddings. Of John they said "he hath a devil!" Of Jesus, "Behold! a glutton and a wine-bibber!" The common people, however, felt His goodness; and although there was naught of boisterous mirth in His social, genial temper, they perceived His tenderness for all weak things. At last this popularity forced Him to make retreats into solitude, and compelled Him to seek privacy by wandering far from Galilee.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mark ii. 13-17; Matt. ix. 9-13.

<sup>2</sup> Luke iv. 42; v. 1; viii. 40; Mark i. 37.





BOOK III  
THE SCHOOL OF JESUS



## CHAPTER I

### THE NEW APOSTOLATE

I. RENAN'S *Life of Jesus* was a triumph of literary art, and at the same time a pathetic disclosure of the limitations of natural genius when it attempts to treat of the Realm of the Spirit. Romanticism failed to plumb the spiritual depths of the New Testament. There are qualifications other than those possessed by the literary artist, requisite even for a partial understanding of Jesus of Nazareth. However much it may savour of presumption to adopt the Pauline principle that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned, there is true philosophy in the affirmation, "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."<sup>1</sup> The Galilean peasant of the French *littérateur's* fancy—dreamy, poetic and unpractical, with a fine genius for religion, and an intellectual vein which was exhausted in the invention of idyllic parables as He walked by the lake—may be pleasing to the imagination of the literary mind; but such a picture has little correspondence with the historic facts of the four Gospels. A picturesque presentation of the Nazarene Carpenter as a moral and social reformer, or as a politico-religious revolutionist, does not adequately reflect the record of facts. Equally deficient in proportion and symmetry is the recent humanitarian view of Jesus which restricts His operation to that of spiritual exegesis. We have now reached a point when we must recognize fully the supreme place of Jesus in the rôle of prophecy and interpretation of the laws of the Spirit, and we should do Him grave injustice did we make no differentiation between Him and other religion-founders. Jesus demands a category by Himself; for, while He delighted to identify Himself with all mankind, He claimed both implicitly and explicitly to be unique and transcendent. He was conscious of being something more than a great Teacher, or the pioneer of spiritual discovery; He was a great actor in the drama of human history. Even though we can formulate no *theory* of His person

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. ii. 14.

that will cover all the facts, it is at least necessary that we should acknowledge both the consciousness of the Primitive Church of the Lord's place in her experience and the character of His own self-consciousness. Of the modern Humanitarian view of Jesus, it must be said that the cloud still rests upon the sanctuary; its advocates have not beheld the full reality. Just as in Africa there is a high mountain almost always covered by mist, so that travellers come near without once discerning its magnitude, so have some scholars approached the historical Person of the Gospels without perceiving His vastness. Sometimes the lifting of the mist for a brief interval has only resulted in filling the mind of the beholder with doubt, and fear of optical illusion; and similarly, if one strives to communicate one's glimpses of the transcendent Christ to those intellectualists who have never seen the lifting of the cloud, one will be adjudged the victim of hallucination. Nevertheless, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also." <sup>1</sup>

2. In the previous chapters, some insight has been gained into the august Spirituality of Jesus' conception of the Reign of God; now it devolves upon us to show how He applied all the powers of His anointed Manhood to give this Empire of the Mind an objective, organized embodiment on earth. The Gospels disclose not only the reveries of a poetic religious genius, but also the statesmanship of a Kingdom-founder. Jesus did not adopt the method of philosophers for the promulgation of a new system; He wrote no dream of an ideal republic; He followed no lines laid down by others; yet, that He had a clearly conceived plan of action, and sought to carry it out as opportunity afforded, there can be little doubt. Vast though His conceptions and projects were, there was neither diffuseness in His expressions nor vagueness in His action; the thunder-clap and lightning-flash of Revelation had not left His mind blinded and huddled in ecstatic helplessness. As soon as He emerged from the obscurity of private life, He struck out the definite lines upon which He had resolved to execute His mission. Although He belonged to the narrowest and proudest of nationalities, Jesus laid His hand upon the universal principles implicit in the theo-

<sup>1</sup> I John i. 1-4.

cratic ideal, and set them forth as the governing ideas of a universal society in which men should be bound—not by blood-ties but by spiritual affinities. Although many centuries have passed since He called His first disciples, the true aim of Jesus has scarcely dawned upon the popular intelligence, and even the churches which call themselves by His name see but dimly the goal He set before them. While the ideal of Jesus was transcendent, it was rooted in the common earth; His Messiahship relates to the æon that shall succeed this, yet it also bears directly upon the present conditions of life. The eschatology of Jesus will come under our notice at a later stage; here we may consider the fellowship He designed to constitute in this present æon,— a *koinonia* based upon the consciousness that God Himself lives in community with men as the Heavenly Father. Jesus sought to beget in men's minds a realization of Divine filialty, and to associate us in a brotherhood wherein love and self-sacrifice shall prevail over all the selfish instincts of natural life. This was Christ's interpretation of the Reign of God on earth; this was the movement He initiated; it was the dominant aim of His life, and today we recognize it as identical with the innermost, Divine purpose of human History.

3. Jesus deliberately rejected the popular and prevailing notions of the Messianic office, and even the prophetic dreams of temporal power and glory which He read in the inspired literature of His race; He looked upon the allurements of world-rule and the specious suggestions springing from the people as temptations full of Satanic malignancy. It required indomitable courage to refuse all the popular expectations of the age—a courage only less remarkable than the exquisite wisdom needed for the choice of the unexpected yet right means to His exalted ends. Facile, indeed, would have been an errant choice, and mere cleverness would have stumbled blindly amid the alternatives proffered; but in faith Jesus chose the true way of Jehovah's Suffering Servant—of renunciation and of patient endurance. But while as the Author of faith He trod the wine-press alone, His task was not simply that of His personal salvation; for, had He walked the sorrowful way without followers, He could not have founded the Kingdom; His faith in the future was justified by the fire-kindling character of the love He cast upon the earth; His certainty of success lay in the attraction He wielded in



alluring others into imitation of Himself. One less divinely wise would have sought adherents first of all from the wealthy and educated classes—from the aristocratic priesthood and the influential Pharisees. But had Jesus aimed at this, His movement would have been throttled by pedantry and prejudice. There was marvellous penetration needed to discover at the beginning that God uses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; even after the lapse of centuries our own glimpses of the Divine reason of this method are seldom sustained by a correspondent faith in practice. The election Jesus made of lowly, labouring men, who, though possessing but little learning, were yet zealous and capable of noble enthusiasm, proves that together with an unparalleled excellence of judgement He cherished a temper uniquely free from clogging earthliness. The whole method adopted by Jesus was characterized by a startling originality. We do not accept the estimate of nationalistic thinkers that the "intellectual grasp" of Jesus was essentially parochial and limited to His own age; rather do we believe that His vision embraced the unevolved processes of the widening range of human life. He planted the germs of the Kingdom of God, and He chose certain men to be His agents in this spiritual husbandry. He projected the evolution of a higher type of humanity—an evolution which, from the plane of present achievement, will appear as revolution. Having enunciated His Gospel of the Kingdom in a general way, He next drew to Himself an inner circle of disciples, whom He could personally train and charge with His own splendid passion of idealism and love. Each step in the execution of His plan was marked with a wisdom which recognized the necessity for immediate reticence, and for the graduated instruction of His chosen pupils.

4. Various and discrepant are the narratives that relate how Jesus called His disciples, and the seeming contradictions can be marshalled with such imposing force that the very credibility of the Gospels seems shaken. St. John represents Jesus as having won the adherence of Andrew, Simon, the unnamed disciple—perhaps John, Philip and Nathanael—before He returned from His baptism into Galilee. St. Matthew however, reports, as though it was the first meeting, that while Jesus walked by the Galilean lake, He saw Andrew and Simon, and bade them follow Him; that the sons of Zebedee also were similarly called. St.

Luke gives the call of Peter in a different connection. Having used the boat of Peter and Andrew for his rostrum, Jesus caused the brothers to launch out and let down their nets; the marvellous draught of fishes surprised Simon into a confession of sin, and the response of the Master was a call to discipleship. Another incident is the call of Levi, the son of Alphæus, from the custom house; it remains, however, an unsettled question whether this man ought to be identified with Matthew, whose call is related in the First Gospel. Again, how difficult it is to bring anything like harmony into the three catalogues of the Twelve Disciples! Nathanael has to be identified with Bartholomew, Matthew with Levi, James (the son) of Alphæus with James the Less, while Judas of James must be one and the same with the disciple variously named Lebbæus and Thaddæus, who must be distinguished from Judas Iscariot. Some readers treat the different narratives as varying traditions of one call; but it is quite reasonable to imagine that the disciples were gradually initiated into the new life, and to suppose that the call was repeated at succeeding stages of their instruction. Whatever uncertainty may exist about this matter, it is plain that Jesus could not be satisfied by a promiscuous evangelism, but that He sought specially qualified pupils who might be trained for future work. The lists of names differ, but it is possible that some of the less distinguished of the Twelve might be supplanted in popular traditions by some of the more prominent members of the Seventy Peræan evangelists. The intimate trio—Peter, James and John—are clearly drawn in the Gospels; but the outer circle of the Twelve is portrayed much less vividly. They all proved vacillating and slow pupils, and their loyalty to Jesus was much marred by coarse ambitions. Only very gradually could their gross expectations be transmuted into an intelligent appreciation of their Master's aims. Judas Iscariot must have exhibited a potentiality of goodness at the beginning; his later career can only be explained as a type of moral degeneration. Matthew not only gave Jesus an opportunity of meeting the ostracized classes (publicans and sinners), but he is credited with having made the first notes of the Lord's *logia*. Of Andrew, Philip and Thomas we know but little, and of others, variously named, we know nothing; and then of that wider circle who were manifestly responsive to Christ's teaching and prepared to go forth as missionaries of the Kingdom, we know not even their names.

5. Our frequent indiscriminate use of the term "disciple" confuses the popular perception of the distinction which Jesus Himself made between the Twelve and ordinary believers. As the name of "apostles" came to be appropriated by the Twelve, the word disciple began to lose some of its definiteness and exclusiveness; and today it is vain to seek a pedantic change of common usage. However, in order to understand the method of Jesus and the beginnings of the Christian Church, it is necessary to take account of the distinct office and mode of life to which the Twelve were chosen. The Twelve were called to be strict imitators of the poverty of Jesus, and they were commanded to abandon their ordinary avocations—first to learn of Jesus, then to propagate His Gospel. Whether persons are chosen and called to follow a similar mode of life now, may be subsequently considered; here we may note that it was not every man that was deemed capable of following the way of Jesus; the Master Himself understood the inherent distinctions in men's dispositions, and plainly demanded a resolute and courageous temper in those who were to attempt the hard tasks of discipleship. There was no hindrance in being uncultured, or in lacking rank or wealth; the absolutely essential qualification was a potentiality of moral sacrifice. St. Paul was able to write of five hundred believers who had known the Lord in the days of His flesh; but Jesus chose only twelve *disciples*. There would have been an element of absurdity in the adoption of the title of "followers" by men who still pursued their worldly avocations and cherished their legitimate ambitions of earthly success. The chief aim of Jesus was to win the allegiance of a band of men who would heroically follow Him and imitate His absolute renunciation of the world. The Master is not to be conceived of as a philosopher like unto Socrates; He never adopted the rôle of a rabbi, whose task was simply to teach impersonal doctrines of religion. The men He called were designated to be pillars of a spiritual community—apostles of Light to the whole world; they were not a monastic body separated from the race, but they were charged by Jesus to leaven the whole community of mankind throughout the world. From the beginning of His mission, there were gradations and *nuances* in believers' approximations to the disciple-ideal set up by Jesus. The most rudimentary belief in Jesus imparted a fine moral energy to the character; a faith no greater than a grain of mustard-seed produced incalculable ethi-

cal consequences; still it must be remembered that, from the few disciples chosen by the Lord to be the official ministers of the new Kingdom, there was demanded a complete renunciation of ordinary pursuits—of the attractions and prizes of this present life. They were not sworn to celibacy or asceticism, but they were set apart for the vocation of apostles and were directed to live by faith in God and to bear themselves with gentleness and forbearance toward men. Unless this special character of the disciple be remembered, the Gospels must seem to present an exaggerated moral ideal, and all attempts to harmonize it with modern Christianity will savour of unreality. The utmost frankness is demanded of us, in order to clear the air of cant and to avoid the pitfalls of hypocrisy: all men are not chosen to be apostles and to go forth in poverty to evangelize the world; if there were many called, only a few were chosen. Had it been otherwise, and had the call to this life of utter renunciation of all external possessions and aggrandizement been made universal, then we should have been forced to acknowledge that Jesus was the supreme anarchist of history. The new apostolate formed by Jesus was necessarily narrow and somewhat exclusive, so that the Twelve should become mediators of a universal Gospel. Such rigorous discipleship was a means to an end; and that end was the constitution of a theocratic community which should permeate and intersphere all the communities and nations of the world.

6. Appeals to the Gospels will, we think, confirm this general statement of the nature and purpose of Christ's institution of discipleship. The abruptness and imperiousness of the special "calls" recorded, may be rather the characteristic of the brief accounts than of the incidents themselves, although it would be quite a mistake to explain away all semblance of command in the manner and tone of Jesus. In the various cases recorded, we may justly imagine a course of preliminary instruction to have been given by Jesus; for example, the two disciples transferred from the Baptist's school listened to the Master's doctrine a considerable time before they were called upon to take final leave of their mundane occupations. The period of preliminary training may have differed in various cases; but in every one of the Twelve, notwithstanding the failure of Judas, Jesus may be supposed to have made proof of the pupil's temper



and spirit before He made His final imperious appeal, "Follow me." In the case of the Galilean fishermen the call was given at the moment when their craft appeared most profitable; yet at the bidding of Jesus, they left all and followed Him. Their obedience demonstrated the existence, in those simple and rough men, of a moral susceptibility to the grand and heroic ideal of Jesus. To one rash aspirant to the difficult office of discipleship Jesus uttered the forbidding words, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Should the occasion arise, then allegiance to the Lord must take precedence even of family duties; for spiritual changes bring new bonds of affinity which go deeper than relationships of flesh and blood!<sup>1</sup> The Great Teacher was explicit about the hardness of the disciple's life; and He refused to tolerate the temper that vacillates: a hesitating, uncertain, doubting man is no more qualified than is the ploughman who looks back fitted for his task of making the furrow straight. Hence, it was a peremptory condition of the apostolate that each new member should renounce, for the sake of Jesus, everything that the world esteems as gain. Behind such a call for moral heroism we discern our Lord's full trust both in God and man; our life depends ultimately upon the Father's will; the disciple might, therefore, cast himself without anxiety upon the hospitality of the people to whom he carried the Word of Truth. Jesus clearly foretold that His Apostles would be cruelly persecuted; still the world's hostility was provoked, not by the disciple's poverty, but by his uncongenial message.

7. One of the important special aims of the Master's ministry was to instruct and discipline the characters of those whom He chose to propagate the Reign of God; and the ordination of the Twelve for the new apostolate constituted a momentous crisis in the development of His plan. St. Luke represents Jesus Himself as fully cognizant of the epoch-making influence of His final choice of the Twelve, recording how He prepared for this election by spending the previous night on some mountain in prayer. Hitherto Jesus had only issued incidental invitations for excursions of varying duration, although in most cases His appeal for the companionship of these men fell upon their hearts with the force of command. The very phrase now used by St.

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 57-62; Mark iii. 32-35.



Luke is significant of the preëminent importance of a step which required a preparatory night of vigil: "He continued all night in the prayer of God." (*τῆ προσευχῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ.*) The interior truth needed investiture in outward organization; the outward was to be the symbol of the Spirit and idea. The choosing of the Twelve is the first step in Christ's programme, the carrying out of which was designed to give form and body to the hidden community of Light. The Reign of God must be made manifest in the external order, and the Truth must be mediated for the popular mind. No touch of undue haste or premature action characterized His ministry; He moved forward with the majestic certainty of one who was sure of the Will of the Eternal. The reference made by the Evangelist to His praying all through the night sheds a clear light upon the continual personal practice of religion by the Lord Jesus. "And when it was day, He summoned His disciples"—the large circle of well-disposed learners who had come out to Him—thus using the term "disciples" in the laxer way, "and of them He elected twelve, whom He also named apostles." The designation of "apostles" may have been given at a later time; the conjunction (*καί*), "marks the naming as a separate act from the election." Jesus then descended from the summit to some level place, where He found a great crowd of learners and a multitude of people awaiting Him. St. Luke clearly distinguishes three groups—the Twelve who were ordained to be apostles, the larger outside circle of believers who loved to receive His instruction, and an interested, curious multitude, eager both to see and hear.

8. This distinction between disciples and other hearers was first made by Jesus Himself: "and when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parables: and He said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive," etc. In response to the inquiry of the young man about the true religious life, Jesus simply demanded that he should keep the commandments; but when urged further by the confession that from his youth he had kept these, Jesus enunciated the way of the perfect life: "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow Me." That was the highest call to absolute renunciation; but, be it remembered, Jesus never thought of summoning every

passer-by to follow this "way." Count Tolstoy in spite of his grand simplicity and magnanimity, errs in that he treats this "call" as universally applicable. But we are not all qualified to be apostles, any more than all are inspired to be poets; most men will confess that they have neither the strength nor the courage to enter upon such absolute self-denial. The Master Himself warned His friends against any rash, inconsiderate abandonment of the prizes of the world; everyone should sit down and count the cost before he begins to build on this plan. Jesus never aimed at pulling down Cæsar's throne or at banishing the institutions of civilized life—of law, literature, art and government; He plainly said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's." Under Divine Providence, a great civilization has grown up in our world, and in it is mixed much of good and much of evil. This civilization has assimilated a great deal of the idealism of Christianity, and the attitude of the Church toward it cannot be one of blank anarchism. In our midst are men endowed with great commercial abilities, who easily acquire wealth. Now while Jesus uttered many grave warnings about the danger of riches, and the difficulty a rich man finds in entering the Kingdom of God, He did not command that every rich man should make himself poor, any more than He taught His disciples to court persecution. On the other hand, Jesus did actually call certain men to a life of utter renunciation; the Twelve were so called: the obligation of poverty was laid upon St. Francis; and those who really obeyed became the salt of the earth—the Light of the World. There is, however, a universal call that all men should destroy self-will by spiritual surrender to the Reign of God in their inmost hearts, and that amid all outward conditions the One spirit and temper of the Lord Jesus Christ should be cultivated by men everywhere.

9. The great dominating motive of the mission of Jesus was to make the Reign of God a reality among men; and He early saw that such a project could be accomplished only through the mediation of an organic community. The dream of a mystical, invisible church, be it never so beautiful, is totally inadequate; if the Kingdom of God was to become something more than a cult of theosophy, it had to be translated into actual relationships and visible institutions. Since our spirits are clothed with flesh,

mind must communicate with mind through the symbolism of speech and the sacraments of action. A true theocracy must be clothed in an external order; and it must develop, just as any other organism, according to the laws of life in material and spiritual environment; although it will be fed from an invisible Divine Fountain. Jesus possessed that practical wisdom which the old Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tsze, had lacked—of statesmanship to form a society upon which He could stamp His ideal. The bond of this society was love to Himself, and from those persons who were drawn into this spiritual attachment He chose Twelve, “whom also He named apostles,” designating them to be the executors and organs of His spirit—evangelists of the Reign of God. The apostle John, in his first epistle, describes this theocratic community as a fellowship of love, wherein men live as brothers under the sovereignty of the Heavenly Father. The fine gold of Christ’s ideal, however, soon became dimmed by the envyings, jealousies and strife of men who carried the temper of the world into the ecclesia. Still, this fact ought not to prevent us from perceiving the true aim and ideal of Jesus, and the ways He sought to carry out His plan. While recognizing all the changes that have taken place in the relation of the Church to the world, we cannot but regret that so few in this age hear and respond to the call of complete self-renunciation; for those who would succeed to the apostolate of the Twelve must follow Jesus, just as did those early disciples, who imitated even the outward life of their Lord. Doubtless, the ministers of all the churches today fulfil important duties and contribute greatly to the general weal of the communities in which they live; but the Reign of God needs men who will follow Jesus even to the relinquishment of all that the civilized world esteems so highly in regard to wealth and comfort. He calls a few in every age to be apostles—imitators of Himself—and a few such citizens of the Divine Kingdom communicate to society the pungent, preserving, transforming qualities of righteousness; they are like a city set on a hill, or a lamp throwing its illumination over the home, or a light of the world shedding a purifying radiance in the midst of the surrounding darkness. Meanwhile there comes to all the call to strive to realize more thoroughly the pure ethic of love taught by Jesus; the vision disclosed on the Mount should inspire us who still walk in the valley to seek first the Reign of God by the practical, daily application of the principles of His righteousness.

## CHAPTER II

### THE IDEAL LIFE OF THE NEW KINGDOM—THE ORDINATION DISCOURSE ON THE MOUNT

1. The election of the Twelve to the New Apostolate was an event of tremendous importance in the ministry of Jesus, and the connection of what is commonly known as "The Sermon on the Mount," with the ordination of the Twelve, suggested by St. Luke, is inherently probable. The very momentousness of this discourse has made it inevitable that no small part of the criticism and controversy of our age should be focused upon it. Many believers of keen ethical insight have shown a tendency to throw overboard the creeds and dogmas of ecclesiastical theologians, if only they may hold fast to St. Matthew's record of this Sermon as the true charter of the Church. But the existence of variant reports of this discourse in the Gospels of St. Matthew and Luke has given rise to the most thorough-going criticism of the text and hypotheses of its origin and transmission. It surprises no observer of present-day modes of thought that some extremists conclude that no Sermon on the Mount was ever delivered by Jesus. St. Matthew, it is suggested, appears to have compiled the reputed *logia* of Jesus which were floating in the early Church without concerning himself deeply about such questions as authenticity, or the time and locality of their deliverance. The Evangelist is not blamed for loose habits of editing; for, however strict the rules of authorship and of publishing today, the first century was free from such restraints; and further there is a certain *timelessness* in the Word of Truth. A more conservative school of critics thinks that, in editing the traditional Sermon which had been transmitted to the Church through several channels, the Evangelist indulged his tendency to group kindred matter, and so incorporated with it sayings which St. Luke has placed in different and perhaps correct connections.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *The Sermon on the Mount*; Hastings' D. B. ext. vol., p. 1ff.



2. Although the controversies concerning the Sermon on the Mount are raging still with unabated zeal, we shall not plunge into the labyrinth by vainly attempting to trace the capillaries of criticism in a single paragraph; but neither shall we forego our right of stating our resultant impressions of the two versions given in the Gospels. We may frankly acknowledge that we identify the discourse delivered on the plain, which St. Luke has recorded, with the Sermon on the Mount, in St. Matthew. Resorting again to the method of impressionism, we have been induced to believe that a long discourse on the ideal life, under the Sovereignty of God the Father, was delivered by Jesus when He chose the Twelve.<sup>1</sup> Such a deliverance could not fail to have been worthy of the epoch-making event which gave occasion for it; and it must have made a corresponding impression upon the receptive minds of those who listened, so that the oral transmission of those great sayings was secured a large degree of accuracy. The various reports ultimately converged upon two main lines of traditional deposits which were translated from Aramaic into Greek and finally found imperishable expression in the compilation of two of the Gospels. Lest there be those who fear that in such a process the genuine utterances of Jesus might be subjected to essential change, the admission of Strauss may be recalled: "The discourses of Jesus like fragments of granite could not be dissolved by the flood of the oral tradition, but were, perhaps, not seldom torn from their natural connection, floated away from the original strata, and landed, like fragments of rock, in places where they do not really belong."<sup>2</sup> However, a comparative study of the four Gospels enables one to conjecture with a large degree of probability the rightful places for many "fragments" which St. Matthew has attached to the great Sermon. The "pattern prayer," for example, was probably taught, as St. Luke says,<sup>3</sup> in response to a definite request after the disciples had seen the Master Himself praying. Singularly enough, St. Matthew repeats the saying about divorce<sup>4</sup> at a later stage, and represents it as Christ's answer to the Pharisees who came to tempt Him,<sup>5</sup> while the *logia* about salt and light, about reconciliation with an adversary, the two masters, the ravens and lilies, and the petitions for a loaf, fish and egg, are

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 12-20.

<sup>2</sup> Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, Eng. Ed., p. 342.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xix. 3-9. Cf. Luke xvi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xi. 1-4.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. v. 31, 32.



all given in different connections in St. Luke's gospel;—such interpolations in St. Matthew do not obliterate the marks of a progressive movement in the Speaker's thought; and in spite of the heterogeneous elements imbedded in it, there is little doubt that St. Matthew's record embodies the trustworthy tradition of a real discourse once spoken by Jesus.

3. After a night of prayer and the formation of the Twelve into a new apostolate, Jesus in the early morning descended the mountain-side till He came to a level place; and here, awaiting Him or coming to find Him, He met a Galilean multitude, who were attracted by His rumoured Messiahship and fascinated by His miracles. The greater number would not be unkindly disposed, but there were probably present also certain Pharisees and Scribes, who had discovered an incipient hostility toward Jesus. The identification of the mountain with Hattin, at the northwest of the Lake, is a matter of interest, but certainly not of vital importance. The design of Jesus was to teach His disciples the true Way of life. St. Luke specifically states<sup>1</sup> that "He lifted up His eyes on His disciples and said, Blessed are ye poor," etc. While St. Matthew places on record that "the multitudes" listened, yet the primary purpose of the discourse was the instruction of the Twelve. It could not have been a merely fortuitous congregation; the multitudes may have dimly felt the approach of a crisis, and while they could not have anticipated the character of the Discourse He would deliver, they had probably come on purpose to hear some authoritative and definite statement about the Kingdom. But while we would not describe the Sermon on the Mount as esoteric, it is necessary to remember that Jesus had in view not so much the needs of the mixed multitude as the special requirements of the disciples He had chosen. Although He lifted up the ideal beatific life in language exquisitely clear and simple, yet only those minds attuned to sympathy with Jesus could possibly enter into the significance of His doctrine. The veil of popular Messianism rested upon the hearts of the multitudes so that they could not understand the spirituality of this Christ. Unless we apprehend the true nature of this Discourse and the occasion of its deliverance, we shall be tempted to explain away the stupendous moral demands of Jesus and to weaken the force of His *logia* by attributing the rigorous dis-

<sup>1</sup>Luke vi. 20.

cipline inculcated to the extravagance inherent in all popular oratory. The teaching of this ordination charge was specially designed for the enlightenment of the Twelve; henceforth Jesus gave His attention to their instruction, that they might be educated in the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

4. The Sermon on the Mount has been described as "the installation of the true people of God on earth by the proclamation of the only righteousness conformable to the holy nature of God, which should characterize the true members of His Kingdom in opposition to the formal righteousness inculcated by the traditional teachings of the example of the doctors." The Beatitudes not only form the prologue; they sum up the Teacher's thesis—the blessed life of the citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>1</sup> There follows from this felicitous introduction a clear enunciation of the disciple's function in the world;<sup>2</sup> and a clear definition of the relation of the new Reign to the Old Covenant<sup>3</sup> treating the external commands of the Decalogue in antithesis to the inner motives and life of the disciple.<sup>4</sup> The next sayings relate to almsgiving or practical righteousness,<sup>5</sup> to the true nature of prayer,<sup>6</sup> to fasting<sup>7</sup> and to trust in God,<sup>8</sup> all of which are to be regulated by the principle of making the supreme aim to be the realization of God's Reign. Rash judgement of one's fellow-men is forbidden;<sup>9</sup> and God's paternal relation to us is made not only a motive of prayer, but also a basis for loving reciprocity between men.<sup>10</sup> And the whole discourse is concluded by solemn exhortations and warnings which are gathered up in a striking parabolic epilogue.<sup>11</sup> Beneath all the supposed gaps and irrelevancies one can trace a real unity of thought in successive stages of development. Instead of looking upon the abrupt transitions as proofs of free editorial compilation, we may adapt Browning's defence of his poetry: "I know that I don't make out my conception by my language; all poetry being a putting the infinite within the finite. You would have me paint it all plain out, which can't be; but of various artifices I try to make shift with touches and bits of outline which *succeed* if they

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 1-12; Luke vi. 20-26.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. v. 13-16.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. v. 17-20.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. v. 21-48; Luke vi. 27-36.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. vi. 1-4.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. vi. 5-8.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. vi. 16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. vi. 19-34.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. vii. 1-5.

<sup>10</sup> Matt. vii. 1-12; Luke vi. 31, 37-42.

<sup>11</sup> Matt. vii. 13-27; Luke vi. 43-49.

bear the conception from me to you. You ought, I think, to keep pace with the thought, tripping from ledge to ledge of my 'glaciers,' as you call them; not stand poking your alpenstock into the holes, and demonstrating that no foot could have stood there."<sup>1</sup> The records, although fragmentary, abridged and variant, will not permit us to indulge in the illusion that the Sermon is merely a mosaic of *logia* compiled without relation to the natural and living body of Christ's teaching. It is not a mosaic, but a cathedral built by the Master-mind of Jesus; the Beatitudes constitute a richly ornamented porchway and entrance into the sanctuary of Truth; all down the aisles there are chapels and shrines, where retreat for prayer and meditation may be secured. Looking at this structure from an external point of view, it seems to reach up into the highest sky of religious poetry; but the essential design is not apprehended until we grope down the steps to the cloisters where the air strikes cold and damp, and where in reflection the mind perceives that the whole building is erected on the plan of the Cross. Here, at the very foundations of all Christ's teaching, we escape the arid disputes of false learning, and our minds become impregnated with the Master's Spirit of sacrificial love.

5. In their treatment of Christ's teaching, scholars have often imitated those soldiers who divided His seamless garment, and, choosing those parts which fall in with their preconceptions, they have alternately set Him forth either as a sage or as a prophet. The enthusiasm of the one appears to them incompatible with the calm, deep, comprehensive thought of the other. Probably renewed examination of the whole body of the teaching of Jesus will disclose a deeper unity than is sometimes suspected, in which the unlike elements are comprehended. The Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount is one with the Seer who poured out his soul in the great Apocalypse; and as we meditate upon the profound and beautiful sayings of the former, we shall discern lines of convergence upon the person of the Speaker. Jesus is never simply a philosopher: even in His most detached and axiomatic truths we catch the accent of personal authority; He Himself is the Truth. Since the fifth century B.C., Judaism had become almost wholly legalistic in its method; but externalism, whether under the guise of Confucian propriety or of Jewish law, fails

<sup>1</sup> Collingwood, *Life of Ruskin*, i. 199.

to change man's heart. Jesus, seeing this, turned away from the hard and narrow routine of Pharisaism and adopted the plan of imparting new inspiration to men by lifting up the ideal. Jesus thus characterized His own teaching as Spirit and Truth. We emphasize this mark of Christ's teaching because if the Sermon on the Mount were only a more detailed form of moral legislation, it would keep us in bondage as minors, and would hang upon the free spirit as a burden. Jesus did not merely formulate new rules; He laid down principles of life which require to be interpreted and applied by the Divine Spirit within man.

6. One of the fashions of criticism has been the attempt to discover parallels for the sayings of Jesus in the old Hebrew Scriptures, or in the remains of Rabbinic writers, in Greek philosophy or Buddhist exhortation, which seem to some readers to rob Jesus of all originality. And yet it in nowise detracts from the freshness and beauty of the Beatitudes, or from the truth of the Golden Rule, to trace their counterparts in other literatures outside the Gospels. If the sayings of Jesus or of any other possess vitality, naturalness and sincerity, the discovery of duplicates will not prevent us from attributing the quality of originality to the speaker. The dewy freshness and translucence of the Beatitudes remain unaffected by our remembrance of corresponding thoughts in the Hebrew Psalms. One of the problems of modern criticism is whether St. Luke's version or St. Matthew's should be considered the more authentic translation of the Aramaic original. Should it happen that St. Luke's record comes to be preferred still we shall ever owe a debt to the evangelist who saves us from falling into an unbalanced literalism. While Jesus may have uttered His Beatitudes in the shorter form of St. Luke's Gospel, it is self-evident to our consciences that St. Matthew has caught the inner meaning of the Master's teaching. On the other hand, it is not forbidden us to suppose that Jesus may have treated His Beatitudes as texts, and repeated them in varying ways. The question as to the proper number of the Beatitudes, whether four or eight, is not easily answered; those sayings concerning the meek, the merciful, the pure and the peace-makers may have been spoken at different times, although St. Matthew followed his literary instinct in adding them to the four recorded by St. Luke. Again, the antithetic "woes" in the Third Gospel may be parts of the original sermon, or may



have been integrated with it in the process of oral transmission. A parallel is sometimes drawn between the giving of the Mosaic Law and the "installation" Discourse of Jesus; but such a comparison only emphasizes the contrast already referred to between the Spirit of the old and the new. Jesus lifted up the ideal of life in the Kingdom of God to inspire His disciples to heightened aspiration and endeavour: He laid stress on love rather than legalism; He wooed His pupils with persuasive ideals; He did not enact a new legislation.

7. This "ordination" Discourse was Christ's annunciation of true happiness, secured by the practice of true righteousness. The word translated *μακάριος* (blessed) was probably the Hebrew term *ashré* used in so many psalms, which the lexicons define as "to go straight out," "to prosper," "to be rightly constituted." On the lips of Jesus it described the progressive and happy condition of one whose chief end of life is to do God's Will. Like Marcus Aurelius at a later time, Jesus transferred the source of happiness from the external circumstances to the inward life of man: hence, in the Reign of God, the most unblest in outward lot may be the most blessed in spirit and reality. Happiness follows as an effect from its cause, and belongs equally to the present state and the future. This will be regarded as but a pious fiction invented to keep up one's courage, if we resort to the calculation of "compensations": its truth depends wholly upon one's attitude to God. The happy poor are those who in adversity and want realize their dependence upon God, and through their poverty acquire a new wealth of soul. Our observation of life and reading of history show that God's most faithful servants are not, as a rule, drawn from the affluent; too often it is found that riches induce in their possessors a quasi-independence which alienates the mind from God. Jesus, however, here gives no command to reduce one's self to outward poverty any more than He enjoins us to create mourning or court persecution. But under the Sovereignty of God *mourning*—i.e., all sadness and sorrows caused by bereavement, loss or penitence—may be transmuted into beatitude, since by it the torn heart is made sensitive to Divine consolations. The meek are akin to the poor, God's lowly ones; the Hebrew word (אֲנָוִים) is rendered either "poor" or "meek." Our English connotation of the word "meekness" is often a soft, yielding temper with a



tendency to weakness; but Christ's ideal of meekness was an heroic character based on humble submission before God and self-abnegation among men. In Jesus Himself we find the best type of Biblical meekness: that equipoise of moral qualities which results from a right standing before God. He was able to say: "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Among the ancient Greeks and the English of modern times, the self-assertive, active and heroic qualities have secured admiration, while paradoxically Jesus attributes triumph and earth's inheritance to those who possess meekness. The true joy of possession never accompanies pride, and victory belongs truly only to self-sacrifice.

8. In the fourth Beatitude, we pass from the passive to the more positive traits in the characters of those who belong to the Kingdom of God; happiness is ascribed to the man who cherishes an earnest longing after righteousness. There is an affinity between this saying of Jesus and the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith; the Apostle translated the ethic of Jesus into the category of jurisprudence; the "faith" or "hunger" contains in itself the germinant principle of all righteousness. The longing for right—an appetite that refuses to remain unsatiated, the resolute pursuit of righteousness in all life's manifold relationships—will be rewarded with repletion. In the character of God the Father the correlate of righteousness is mercy, and both these qualities must be reproduced in the subject child of the Divine Reign. When Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," He made the receptivity of God's grace to be conditional upon man's active exercise of a Godlike temper. A callous indifference to suffering was the mark of paganism, even at its highest. Aristotle took but little account of pity in his catalogue of the springs of human action: such an emotion was treated as a disturbing factor in the sunny, strong serenity of the Greek temper; but Jesus, by His word and example, introduced a new tide of compassion, which has proved one of the mightiest forces in all subsequent progress. His altruism gave a new sensitiveness to human conscience. "The public mind has become so intolerant of the sight of misery or wrong of any kind that, as the conditions of the life of the excluded masses of the people are gradually brought under discussion and come into the

light, this feeling of intolerance slowly gathers force, until at last it finds expression in that powerful body of opinion or sentiment which has been behind all the great social and political reforms of our time."<sup>1</sup> The next Beatitude is conjoined with purity of heart—a state of mind essential to the perception of God. Such purity is not merely the absence of moral stain: nor must it be restricted to signify a prohibition of sensuality; it denotes simplicity—a singleness of aim issuing in undivided allegiance to the rightful Master of the soul; it is no mere negation, but a holy fire. The Beatific Vision is as much a natural consequence as a supernatural reward: it is the consciousness of God's presence which accompanies a participation in the Divine character. The outward senses are duplicates of inward, spiritual faculties: as soon as the cloud lifts above the sanctuary, the inner eye attains its direct and sure vision of the Divine. Plotinus formulated the condition of all such spiritual perception: "He must become Godlike who desires to see God." In order to know Him and to recognize His approaches to the soul, there must be moral affinity and sympathy between Subject and Object.

9. Both active and passive states of the citizen of God's Kingdom are described in the seventh and eighth Beatitudes: such an one makes peace and patiently endures persecution and calumny for righteousness' sake. Christ is the Prince of Peace; His great work in our world has been to reconcile God and man. Strife and discord are contrary to the Divine Reign, whether they be exhibited in the Church or in the world's organizations of society and nations. The Peace of God which passes understanding is, however, no facile acquisition; it is something that must be sought after and gained by moral effort: it is both the gift of God's grace and the moral achievement of man. Yet even he who makes peace carries a sword; he is often misunderstood, and incurs the reproach of those whom he essays to bless. Still, they who bear contumelies and persecution for righteousness' sake have the blessing of knowing that they are diffusing God's peace in the world.

10. No separate beatitude has been pronounced by Jesus upon Love; but our surprise at this omission is removed by the reflection that all the virtues blessed are but facets of the one dia-

<sup>1</sup> Kidd, *Social Evolution*, chap vii., 190, 191.

mond of Christlike love. These eight beatitudes describe the ideal character of the new theocracy; they reveal the stature of the manhood of Jesus—His experiences crystallized into these eight words. His holy mind was distilled in perfect speech. There are those who pronounce the ideal of Jesus incomplete;—it is too other-worldly: it lacks those harder, sterner, more heroic qualities that have ever made the deepest impress upon civilization; Jesus has given no beatitude to those civic and political virtues which ought to characterize man's relations to the state, and which set forth the ideal of public duty. According to such critics the ideal of Jesus is too soft, too spiritual, and bears no adjustment to the stern conditions of our modern world. We shall seek to answer this criticism in the following pages; here we may simply point out that the subjectivism is spiritual, the individualism of Jesus is compatible with the true universalism of humanity, and that the emphasis upon the inward state of man's life is balanced by the unifying conception of God's Reign. Other sages have deemed the blessed life as possible only for a few—excluding slaves, paupers and victims of disease; but Jesus declares that all alike may win true happiness by seeking it not in external possessions, but within the soul itself, when it becomes the subject and son of the Divine Sovereign and Father. As though He would accentuate this inwardness of beatitude, St. Luke records that Jesus pronounced antithetic woes against wealth, satiety, laughter and worldly reputation. Jesus condemned the very things that Aristotle had deemed necessary conditions of the blessed life, condemning them not arbitrarily and without reason, but on the ground that they tend to make man forget his absolute dependence upon God's bounty. Such paradoxes can be understood only when man's life is viewed in relationship to God: in the Kingdom of Heaven the Divine strength is made perfect in our weakness. While the right use of wealth and the diffusion of glad laughter might extend God's Reign, these material conditions are also often made obstructions to man's full recognition of God's Sovereignty and Fatherhood.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ETHIC OF DISCIPLESHIP IN THE REIGN OF GOD

1. JESUS cannot be said to have differentiated between ethics and religion. In His teaching these two things are one, or at least they run into each other with such fine *nuances* as defy attempts at delimitation. The Sacred Books of the East prohibit us from saying that morality and religion are theoretically inseparable; but in the Gospels, true religion expresses itself always in the ethical life. In the Chinese *Analects* it is shown that Confucius, after the manner of a modern Positivist, actually began a divorce of this nature; the sage was more concerned about morality than about the rites of religion, and he defined man's correct behaviour thus, "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to man, and while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them." Gautama, the Indian saint, advanced still farther on this way; for, however pure and noble the pessimistic ethic of Buddha may have been, it is no slander to characterize it as fundamentally atheistic. Although God has not at any time left Himself without witness, these great teachers failed to attain the clear vision of Him; and, since the contemporary religious beliefs were corrupt in their eyes, they sought to base their ethical systems on the ground of existent social relationships. In fine contrast with their method, Jesus frankly built upon the lofty monotheism of His race. The "ordination" Discourse, uttered after the designation of the Twelve to the Apostolate, consisted in the clearest annunciation of the principles of life which must guide the subjects of God's Sovereignty. The ethic inculcated by Jesus was differentiated from the systems alluded to by its dependence upon man's acknowledged relationship to God, and likewise from both contemporary Judaism and ancient Mosaism by the intense realization that this God is man's Heavenly Father.

2. Before exploiting this fundamental and architectonic idea of God's paternal relation with man, we may glance at a more



momentous question than that concerning the connection of ethics and religion—viz. whether it is possible for us to accept the ethic of Jesus as authoritative and final. Writers<sup>1</sup> of the school of John Mill charge the teaching of Jesus with incompleteness; and, while offering respectful homage to the Galilean Sage, they complain that His doctrine is too negative and too remote from the issues of modern life to give adequate guidance. According to them, the ethic of Jesus lacks the note of finality, because it fails to give due place to the duties of public life and to communicate the definite direction we all long for amid the labyrinths of the civilization which is vaguely misnamed "Christian." Such a criticism as this receives strong support from the popular perception of the immense disparity between the Sermon on the Mount and the actual code of morals guiding the conduct of the average professing Christian in his public and business life. If this criticism be valid, if Jesus cannot give us the authoritative and final Word of Life in all emergencies, then let us acknowledge His limitations, and set ourselves to discover a more adequate guide for our modern world; but before acquiescing in these accusations, it is surely wise to consider the exact nature of Christ's teaching, and also to reflect what was possible in the circumstances of His mission. The recollection of what we have repeatedly pointed out, that the Sermon on the Mount was primarily designed for the special instruction of the Twelve, will draw the sting from the frequently uttered opinion that very few, if any, of those who call themselves Christians actually try to live according to these sublime *logia*. And next, it is easily discerned that Jesus could not have spoken in any definite and satisfactory manner about the Jews' relation to the state without seeming to encourage that political and revolutionary Messianism which would have involved Him in the fatal vengeance of Rome within six months of His beginning public work. Besides, had He spoken what was *à propos* in that age, concerning the citizen's particular duties to the state, His teaching would have been an anachronism in the twentieth century. The one method of escaping the charge of political incendiarism in that first century, on the one hand, and

<sup>1</sup> Mill, *Essay on Liberty*, People's Ed. II., p. 29. "Christian morality so-called has all the characteristics of a reaction; it is in great part a protest against Paganism. Its ideal is negative rather than positive; passive rather than active; innocence rather than nobleness; abstinence from evil rather than energetic pursuit of the good."



of irrelevance to the needs of succeeding epochs on the other, was that adopted by Jesus of lifting up an ideal rather than a new code—of dealing with principles rather than with definite rules, of speaking in the Eternal Spirit rather than to perishing flesh. And renewed study of His teaching has ever served to elicit fresh guidance for man, and also to demonstrate His Lordship over every age. The further vindication of adequacy and authority of Christ's ethics will be found in each succeeding step of this study of His ministry. The marvel of Christ's plan, and the execution of it which steadily grows upon the mind with increasing understanding, is the perfect wisdom He exhibited at every stage.

3. The teaching of Jesus has many facets, and can never be exhausted from one standpoint: hence, while the theme of the Sermon on the Mount may be defined as the Blessed Life, or the Perfect Righteousness, the unifying idea of this ethical discourse may with equal truth be described as the Kingdom of Heaven. But then the governing conception of that Divine Reign in the mind of Christ was the Fatherhood of God. A few of the sayings of Jesus, chosen almost at random, will demonstrate the formative influence, the persistence and penetrative energy of this thought: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven." "Be ye sons of your Heavenly Father, for He causes His sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and His rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous." "Be merciful even as your Father is Merciful."<sup>1</sup> "Be ye therefore perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Alms must be given without ostentation as before the Father in heaven. Prayer is to be made to God as "thy Father" who hears and answers. Only a fool would expect an answer, as Heinrich Heine said, unless there be the controlling idea of the Divine Fatherhood in the mind. According to Jesus God is trustworthy, "for your Father knows what things you need even before you ask Him." Such recurrence of the Divine name in the Mountain Discourse cannot be attributed to the accident of a meagre vocabulary; it is the designed reiteration of a Master Teacher, who desired to stamp this conception of God upon the minds of His disciples forever; to be their inspiration—the motive of all goodness and the consolation of every sor-

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 36.

row. He would have them seize this fresh revelation experimentally, and deduce from it all legitimate inferences. This consciousness of the Fatherhood of God is like the circumambient and universally diffused atmosphere in which alone the ideal of the Blessed Life may be realized. And yet, according to the teaching of Jesus, approximation of character to the Divine likeness is the essential condition of true knowledge of God: mere words convey but little of such truths as these; they are learned morally and experimentally: only by living in correspondence with the Father can the intellect come at length to master this spiritual revelation.

4. The consciousness of the Divine Fatherhood was the necessary antithesis implicated in the filial Spirit of Jesus. It seems not to have been gained by intellectual processes; it was something given in the very ground of His Humanity. Priority and posteriority belong equally to the eye and to the light; there could be no light without the seeing eye that may be touched by the undulations of ether, and, from the evolutionary standpoint, no eye could have been developed without the outward stimuli falling upon the sensitive pigment-spot. The inevitability of this logical circle demonstrates the existence of some comprehensive potency which originates and conditions all subjective and objective interactions such as these. In some such manner may we speak of the filial consciousness of Jesus; in it is also given the reality of Divine Paternity: neither of these terms can be postulated without the other. And these correlatives of Fatherhood and Sonship constituted the root-conception of the entire ethic of Jesus; all His teaching on moral and social relationships grew with the inevitability of a biological law from these radical ideas. The Reign of God, as He was known to Jesus, necessarily draws men into a brotherhood; it creates love by love, and thus brings about the fulfilment of all law. For the culture of such a catholic virtue aspiration and effort are demanded; and yet we know love cannot be commanded: it must unfold spontaneously under the radiance of Christ's conception of God. The idea of the Divine Fatherhood is the sun of our inward sky, and, like the Greenland sun, it never sinks below the horizon. Our socialist reformers will yet learn that no efforts to make the sentiment of brotherhood practical and regulative can possibly succeed apart from a participation in Christ's consciousness of God. The ethic

of perfect reciprocity is paradoxical, and impossible for all who live on the accepted plane of modern civilization with its endless competitions and rivalries. The maxim of non-resistance to evil, the injunction to turn the other cheek to the smiter, and the bare suggestion of returning good for evil, are in contradiction to the instincts and common sense of men: hence, even church-members hasten to empty all such rules of their positive meaning. And yet the common opinion that Jesus lifted up an impossible standard is one of the credentials which attest its imperishability. Jesus took knowledge of that in man which is like the penumbra of the Infinite, and gave a corresponding extension to His religious ethic. Had His teachings been less spiritual or less exalted, His sovereignty over conscience would have come to an end—i.e. the mind would have been driven to look for another King. The ideal Jesus gave was an exact replica of His own inward life, and it abides as the world's exhaustless inspiration to aspire after the perfect life.

5. The poignancy and burden of the problem which rests upon the Christian conscience, however, is that the ethical ideal of Jesus seems incompatible with the actual institutions and customs of human society.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, if we sit at the foot of the letter and treat the Sermon on the Mount as a new code imposed upon us by an external authority, we shall either be impelled toward anarchy, or compelled to abandon the ethic of Jesus as irrelevant to the actualities of our world. In one of his Irish dramas, Mr. Yeats gives the result of a man's attempt to model his life on the teaching of Jesus as a mania for tearing up and destroying everything. The doctrine of non-resistance leaves no margin for militarism; the inculcation of unlimited forgiveness undermines the whole of our judicial and forensic institutions. The answer to this objection is twofold: the Sermon is an ideal and not a code; it was addressed specially to men designated for the new

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 139. "A candid examination will show that the Christian civilizations have been as inferior to the Pagan ones in civic and intellectual virtues as they have been superior to them in the virtues of humanity and of chastity." The same writer affirms that the new faith was greatly aided by a decline of patriotism. "The relations of Christianity to the sentiment of patriotism were from the first very unfortunate. While the Christians were, for obvious reasons, completely separated from the national spirit of Judæa, they found themselves equally at variance with the lingering remnants of Roman patriotism." Vol. ii., p. 140.

apostolate, and was not for miscellaneous application. Admirably noble as the conduct, character and personal influence of Count Tolstoy are, and persuasive though his literary style may be, yet his method of interpretation carries one back into an unspiritual and servile state when a rule must be carried out whether it be understood or not. Legislation must never be too far advanced beyond popular feeling, or it will be silently de-potentiated of authority by persistent disobedience; an ideal, on the contrary, while it creates the sense of failure, helps to bring out of man's travail a new birth to the moral will. The puzzled disciple asks, "Lord, shall I forgive seven times?" and the answer is given, "Yea, till seven times seventy." "If I am smitten, am I to turn the other cheek?" "If one rob me of my coat, ought I to reward his theft by a gift of yet another garment?" Those who treat the Sermon on the Mount as an external legislative authority will be forced to answer these queries in the affirmative. But if this "ordination" Discourse be a reflection in imperfect speech of Christ's Ideal, we shall not be bound by the outward letter as by an outward chain, but we shall be drawn into approximations and conformities by its spirit. Jesus leaves room for the exercise of reason and conscience; He speaks to His disciples not as to slaves, but as to sons of the Heavenly Father led by the Spirit of God. In this Divine Brotherhood of the Kingdom each disciple must judge whether both the good of an offender and of society may not demand correction. There are instances where non-resistance, literally carried out, would augment malignant evils: because of the fraternal bond the wicked wishes of criminals and madmen must be resisted and those who purpose evil must be restrained. Brotherhood esteems the good of all, and if necessary will subjugate the individual ends to the wider goal of the Kingdom.

6. But while the Sermon on the Mount transfers the emphasis from the external rule to the inward principle, and makes the motive love rather than law, it also throws an intense illumination upon the inward life of man, and interrogates the secret thoughts and emotions which are hidden from all save Omniscience. The world's lawmakers have been content to forbid outward acts of murder, adultery and theft; but Jesus, although He emancipates us from the bondage of the law, draws us under the radiance of an ideal that lays bare the essential nature of sin,



showing that hate carries in itself the guilt of murder, and the cherishing of a fleshly desire is the seed of adulterous acts. No mere cult of external propriety could satisfy Jesus; He set Himself to purify our life at its springs. The very loftiness and rigour of this Ideal testify to the infinite value of man's life in the eyes of God. The invisible part of man's life receives an accentuation in the teaching of Jesus, such as was requisite to balance the tendency, of sects as wide asunder as Pharisee and Confucian, to lay stress almost wholly upon the ceremonial aspects of life and conduct. In the heart of man lies coiled that mainspring which gives power to all the intricate movements of life. But this declaration by Jesus of the essential value of those hidden sources of power and motive in the secret hearts of men gave no sanction for minimizing the importance of external activities. There is no unbalanced subjectivity in the ethic of Jesus. He does not sever the root from the flower: in the flower, which like a beautiful censer flings its incense on the breeze, Jesus sees the virtue and meaning of the root-life, and He remembers more constantly than most teachers that the beauty and perfume of the bloom are drawn from the hidden root.

7. In this "ordination" Discourse, as in all parts of Jesus' teaching, there is traceable the enthusiasm for humanity which did so much to give shape to His Ministry. Neither the cloud of flesh nor the alienating sin in man could hide from His eyes the real, intrinsic value of the soul. Jesus speaks as though the potentiality of Divine Sonship is in everyone: by voluntary surrender to the sovereignty of God man is born from above and is made a conscious subject of the Heavenly Kingdom. And Jesus sums up the principle of community life in the Golden Rule: "All then that you would have men do to you, do also to them yourselves; for this is the law and the prophets." Every man is to be treated as a brother: "Why look at the splinter in thy brother's eye, and mark not the beam in thine own eye?" There is the note of timelessness in such teaching; it belongs equally to every age; and when Kant, our great Copernicus of modern thought, came to express the fundamental ethical principle of his philosophy, he only gave a variant of Christ's great saying: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." All the social wrongs, commercial evils, and frightful in-



equalities of our modern states will be remedied only through the realization of this principle of reciprocity. In private life and in public affairs, in domestic duties and in the large transactions of commerce, in the administration of civic justice and in the fulfilment of international relations, Christ's principle of brotherhood needs to be applied. Inherent in the Ideal of the Kingdom of God is the thought of the "common good" unto which all our egoisms and personal interests have to be subjugated. The teaching of Jesus throws into bold relief and perfect equipoise the two contrasting and yet complementary ideals of perfect personality and a righteous society—the soul and the Kingdom: the individualism inseparable from Christian ethics is bound up with a thoroughgoing collectivism. It is an instance of reckless confusion to identify the Sermon on the Mount with modern schemes of socialism; but, in making this necessary distinction, it may not be overlooked that Jesus gave to the world the ultimate ideal and goal of all social progress. But before we make attempts to adopt the outward forms of Brotherhood in a universal republic and in vast coöperative schemes of economic life, there must be a larger realization of the Spirit of Jesus, and a fuller, inward and individual surrender to his authority. In view of the great drift of modern thought and movements toward modified forms of socialism, it is of utmost importance that Christians should acknowledge the ultimacy and relevance of the Ideals of Jesus concerning the individual and the Kingdom, and also the fact that reconstructions of society must derive from His perfect religion their motive and dynamic. Unless the leaders of social reform find in Jesus their ideal and inspiration, they will only bring about costly and futile revolutions, and instead of terminating economic tyrannies, industrial wars and conditions of slavery, they will but substitute one class of oppressors for another.

8. But while we advocate the most extended application of the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, it is well to emphasize yet again that it was spoken primarily to the disciples; and there can be no question concerning the practicableness of the Ideal or the applicability of the principles of this teaching among those who acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus. As if He had modelled His discourse upon the exhortations and comminations of Deuteronomy, Jesus concluded His teaching on the Hill with an im-

pressive warning: there are two ways, the narrow and the broad, leading to life and death, and men must choose where they will walk. The Divine judgement of men will be determined, not by their words, but by their deeds. The lives and destinies of those who receive the words of Jesus as their chart, and of those who deliberately reject them, are represented in the parable of the two buildings that were tested by storm. The epilogue leaves no hearer in doubt that Jesus enunciated His sublime ideal for the guidance of all who desire to become His disciples. Precious, indeed, have been these great "sayings" to the churches throughout the centuries, recalling men again and again from distorted forms of ecclesiasticism and orthodoxy to the ethic of grace and truth.

9. Our treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, though professing to be brief and fragmentary, must direct attention to the vital relation of the Speaker to His words. We have shown the theological basis of Christ's ethics, and now account must be taken of the Teacher's personal integer. The Ideal we have sought to understand is but the transcript of the pure and lofty soul of Jesus Himself. In Him the Ideal had become the Real; knowledge and being in His experience were one; He knew the Truth and lived it; His conscience was pure and His vision clear. The intenser the light the darker will be the shadows thrown by aught that obstructs it; since, then, the radiant whiteness of Christ's Ideal casts no shadow of confession of personal guilt, there must be attributed to Him a unique, moral inerrancy. "When He had made purification of sins, [He] sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high; having become by so much better than angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they." There is a partial truthfulness in the opinion that men of all moral religions might adopt the ethics of Jesus without abandoning their adherence to Buddhism or to Mohammedanism; but this is not wholly correct. Many of the *logia* of Jesus bear the stamp of universality; they are self-authenticating: thought has been precipitated in perfect speech, so that even in repeated translation they retain some inimitable quality of genius and an exquisite freshness. There are sayings which must have survived all the disintegrating forces of time by reason of an inherent imperishability—such, for example, as "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow! they toil not, neither do they

spin: yet, I tell you, even Solomon in all his grandeur was not robed like one of these." And yet for the most part we trace the motive for the transmission of the words of Jesus to the attachment of His disciples for Him. Since the Master did not write His discourses, they would gradually have passed from men's memories, had not the soul-compelling faith in His Person made men eager to record His words and acts. It was the faith of St. Paul and St. John that gave an adequate motive for recording the Sermon on the Mount. St. John, indeed, has given no place for this discourse; and further, the addresses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel have been so tinctured with the Evangelist's mind that they bear little resemblance to the crystalline sayings of the Sermon on the Mount. And yet it is only when we adopt the apostolic point of view of St. John, that Jesus Himself is the Truth, that we begin to appreciate the full beauty and cogency of this "ordination" Discourse.

10. The contrast is sometimes made between the Sermon on the Mount and the orthodox creeds; this signifies that the ethics of the Gospel are preferred to doctrines of theology, that morals count for more than faith. Such a dialectic, however, is due to lack of lucidity. If our account of the Sermon on the Mount be correct, there can be no real separation between faith in Jesus and the following of His teaching. The creeds are historic symbols which resulted from the struggle of early Christians to hold the totality and proportion of the Revelation of God in Jesus. When we deal with ultimate values, we discover that *persons* count more than thoughts; the chief wealth of ideas lies in their disclosure of the conceiving mind. The Truth of revelation is not a system of abstract reasoning, but the relationship of actual Persons: science is an attempt, more or less successful, to interpret the symbols by which the Creator communicates with His creatures and His children. While the Sermon on the Mount preserves the words of Jesus, the Lord Himself is the "Word" of Supreme value. The true secret of the Mountain Discourse lies not in the ethical altitude or literary beauty of detached sayings, but in the Speaker's own Personality. The authority of the ethic of Jesus is not that of abstract reasoning: it is personal; throughout the Sermon, He places Himself in the midst of His teaching as the chief motive of the righteous life in the theocracy. Jesus definitely claimed to speak as the Fulfiller of the Law and the

Prophets. The truths of the moral universe passed through His life with self-convicting authority; He realized them livingly.

Over against the authority of the Decalogue, Jesus uses the antithesis, "But I say unto you." We observe that the Beatitude of the Persecuted turns upon the sufferer's attitude to Jesus; if he submits "*for His sake*," then shall he rejoice. This recalls the Old Testament disclosure of God's motive for self-revelation and redemption in Israel—"for mine own sake" ( *למען* ).<sup>1</sup> Behind the phrase lies the living character; God could act no otherwise since He is what He is. It was no accident that led Jesus to use this very phrase to define the motive of discipleship in the Kingdom. He declared Himself to be man's Final Judge: "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord . . . And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."<sup>2</sup> Behind the Sermon was the Teacher's life; and, while His words contained much of highest moment, the most determinative thing for the disciples lay in the impact upon their minds of Christ's regal, authoritative Personality. In a previous chapter, we found a ground of credibility for His miracles in our impression of His Person: so now we reach the position that His ethical teaching demands to be interpreted in the light of His Person, and can only be applied through the dynamic of an enthusiasm created in the soul by His personal influence. His works and words alike are but the outshining of the Truth and Grace that were embodied in His Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xliii. 25; Jer. xiv. 21; Ezek. xx. 9, 14, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. vii. 22, 23.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TRAINING OF EVANGELISTS IN TWO MISSIONS

I. THE training and equipment of the Twelve constituted one of the primary motives of our Lord's ministry. Beyond this inner circle, which was destined to become the Apostolate, were other adherents to whom the name "disciples" could be applied only in a much looser way: they believed in some manner that Jesus was the Christ sent of God to establish the Heavenly Kingdom; and the Master sought to make even their faith instrumental in propagating His Evangel. Outside of this company of "believers" were the mixed multitudes from whom fresh converts were drawn from time to time. At the beginning of His public work, our Lord necessarily made His appeals to the miscellaneous groups who gathered, wherever He went, to see His miracles and listen to His interesting discourses. It was during the initiatory evangelization of the multitudes that Jesus planned and executed His synagogue visitation; and this was followed by attempts to reach the people of ill-repute,<sup>1</sup> the irreligious and excommunicated, for which purpose Matthew appears to have been chosen. As the weeks and months passed by, the audiences that gathered wherever Jesus went were sifted and divided; the professional classes passed into incipient hostility; crowds wavered and waited to follow the most profitable course that might open; but in every congregation there appeared a circle of really attached friends, who sought every opportunity of hearing Him whom they had come to regard as Messiah; and at the heart of this little company of friends was a limited number of earnest disciples from whom Jesus ultimately chose His Twelve Apostles. The ordination of these men marked a distinct change in the character of His ministry. He still felt a great, tender pity for the people: "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered as sheep having no shepherd."

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, *With Open Face*, p. 112.



Yet He could not fail to see that the itinerant evangelization of Galilee had been attended by comparatively meagre results, and, lamenting the impenitence of the people, He foretold the coming destruction of their national life and their dispersion. To complete our mental picture of Jesus' ministry during this itineration, we must conceive of Him as dependent upon the charity of friends:—a band of faithful women, in particular, served Him in regard to His temporal wants.<sup>1</sup> At times Jesus gave utterance to His longing for labourers, and urged His hearers to pray God to thrust out reapers into the harvest field.<sup>2</sup> Hence it came about that the Master withdrew Himself more and more from the popular and indefinite rôle of the Preacher, in order that He might become the Teacher of definite disciples. He would take His apostolate of Twelve and a few other ardent adherents into desert places, climb the mountains with them, or make sudden excursions across the lake, so that they might have opportunities of receiving the fuller instruction He had for them. This narrowing of His sphere of work and concentration upon the task of training His disciples afford an object lesson to the Church. Society is like a great pyramid, broad at the base, but, as we ascend the higher planes of life, it becomes narrower and yet more narrow; the intellectual and ethically cultivated are comparatively few, and at the apex is the Church, the most highly organized society of the spiritual friends of Jesus. Those who stand at the highest point are few in number; they exist, however, as mediators of the new life for all: it is no weakness to be numerically small, since, from that point of contact with Christ, currents of life are communicated down through all the planes, and the whole body of humanity is plenished from its moral and spiritual apex. Jesus saw plainly that a small, elect, well-instructed, profoundly attached company of disciples might be launched as the apostolate of Universal Religion, and might mediatorially accomplish the world-wide diffusion of the Faith.

2. The discipline of the disciples was not exclusively a matter of mental instruction; the knowledge Jesus imparted was of that moral and spiritual order which can be mastered in action

<sup>1</sup> Luke viii. 1-3; ix. 7-9; Mark vi. 14, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 35, 38; Luke x. 2.

only. Those men were not trained as thinkers; they were to be agents of a Universal Evangelism; they had to receive, understand and communicate a message from God, and they were also to embody that message in a new fellowship. The aim of Jesus was to stamp each one of them with His own mind, to project His spirit into their souls, so that when He was withdrawn from visible, fleshly association with men they might carry forward the establishment of the Reign of God. There was no academic remoteness in the methods of Jesus; He knew that the best school is that wherein men may practise what they learn. The Twelve could never become apostles by merely listening; having learned somewhat of Him, they must begin to teach. Jesus kept in view not only the evangelization of the masses, but also the adequate discipline of the evangelists. He was seeking to train these men for the future, and at the same time to give to Galilee another opportunity of acknowledging Him as the Messiah. It seems natural to suppose that the Mission of the Twelve in Galilee must have taken place toward the end of the Personal Ministry of Jesus in that province, although Weiss imagines it to have been before He visited the capital at the unnamed feast. Only a tentative account can be given of the sequence of events; still it seems probable that the Mission of the Twelve took place at the termination of Christ's third visit to Galilee, at the time when the avowed hostility of Scribes and Pharisees and the aroused interest of the dangerous Herod made it imperative that Jesus should avoid a premature ending of His life. The topical affinities of the subject of the Mission of the Twelve, however, justify our anticipation of events and the displacement of an outstanding incident such as the Lord's celebration of the unnamed feast. We may imaginatively insert in this strenuous ministry of miracles and preaching in Galilee, as occurring before the Twelve were sent forth, the deliverance of the seaside Discourse of the parables, the calming of the storm on the Lake, the healing of the demoniac, the cure of the woman suffering from an issue of blood, and the restoration of Jairus' daughter.<sup>1</sup> The fresh remembrance of this remarkable ministry would give the needed background for the Message of the Kingdom of God which the Twelve were now commissioned to carry through Galilee.

<sup>1</sup>Luke viii. 1-3; Mark iv. 1-34; Matt. xiii.; Mark iv. 35ff.; Luke viii. 22-39.

3. An important question must now be raised as to there having been one mission or two; whether, besides the Twelve, Jesus also sent forth the Seventy. St. Luke alone has preserved an account of two distinct missions. The silence of the earlier evangelists concerning the tour of the Seventy has prompted the suggestion that "the good doctor" confused various reports of one mission, and made mistaken inferences. The reasons for such an error were, first, the different order of sequence in his apostolic sources, and the extended record of *logia* in St. Matthew's Gospel<sup>1</sup> relating to the mission without any parallel or duplicate in St. Mark. Some critics do not hesitate to attribute the typical number of *seventy* to St. Luke's universalism, of which that number is a symbol. But I confess it is most difficult for a moderate judgement to acquiesce readily in the surmise that St. Luke, whom Sir William Ramsay places among the historians of first rank, should have indulged in fabulous inventions in the interests of his symbolism. Further, acquaintance with the mission field prohibits one from treating as traditional reduplications all resemblances in a narrative full of incident. While we do not feel it incumbent upon us to explain all the remarkable omissions from the Gospels, we may recall the fragmentary character of these compilations, and at the same time venture the conjecture that, since the Twelve were actively engaged in Galilee when Jesus sent the Seventy into Peræa and Judæa, it is but natural that the two Gospels emanating most directly from the Apostolic Circle should omit the account of a second mission. Correspondence between the commission and charges relating to these two notable enterprises may be due to natural confusions; for we know St. Matthew never hesitated to group the *logia* of Jesus according to their topical characteristics, though he knew they were spoken at different times; and there is nothing improbable in the speculation that Jesus may have repeated to the Seventy some of the instructions He had given to the Twelve.

4. Surprise has been provoked by the restriction of the first apostolic propagandism to Jewish territory; yet, upon reflection, even in this may be discerned the sagacity of true statesmanship. The first foundations of God's new Sovereignty must be laid in that society which has been specially trained; within this circum-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 2-42; Mark vi. 7-13.

scribed area must be found the fulcrum whence a universal lifting force should be exerted upon mankind. Had Jesus straightway sent the Apostles into the highways of the Gentile world, the diffusion of the effort would have slackened its intensity, and the result would have been nugatory. Under the guiding Will of God, Israel had become the mediator of monotheism for the nations; and Jesus now sought to organize a spiritual Israel, by which He might ultimately win a world-wide community. If we adopt St. Luke's narrative of the second mission as historical, then Jesus must be represented as planning also the evangelization of Samaria and of the people of the province beyond the Jordan. But the appointment of the Seventy was not made until the Feast of the Tabernacles; the commissioning of these evangelists may have spread over many days, Jesus sending some out one day, and another band of men later, repeating His instructions to the several groups. That there should have been seventy men capable and willing to engage in such an enterprise, is not discordant with the facts recorded in the other gospels. Many were called to be disciples besides the Twelve; and while some refused the high vocation, there were probably those ready to accept the call. We must avoid the error of imaginatively transferring the fixed ecclesiastical orders of later days to the ministry of Jesus; besides the Twelve, there were many who attached themselves to the little company of disciples for a time: some adherents might find occasions for following Jesus a few days at a time, and then return to their regular avocations. That the Master found a band of loyal supporters in His itinerations might be inferred from the fact that there were a hundred and twenty who companied with the Twelve, and so were accounted eligible for nomination to take the office vacated by Judas at a later date.<sup>1</sup> The names and characters of the Seventy are not recorded; their temper and feeling may be gauged, however, by the known tests that Jesus addressed to other candidates for the discipleship. St. Matthew and St. Luke record the Master's feeling of the urgent need of labourers, and the figure of the harvest used by Him indicates that He looked upon the populace as ready for the evangel of God's Reign. While His own Personal Ministry in Galilee had proved disappointing, He did not abandon His quest for suitable disciples, but, wooing His followers with gracious words and

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 15-26.



acts, He sent forth such as were worthy, that they might cast the fire of a great love upon the earth.

5. These two missions constitute important stadia in the Life of Jesus, although it is most difficult to supply the chronological connection. We imagine that having sent out the Twelve two and two, Jesus Himself left Galilee and passed southward toward Jerusalem. To us it appears totally inconsistent with the underlying purpose of such a mission to suppose, as Bishop Ellicott did, that the Twelve returned from their mission "not more than two days afterwards." The disciples must have carried on their evangelism not for a few days merely, but for many weeks. Holding to our conjecture that the Mission of the Twelve was inaugurated at the end of Christ's third visit to Galilee after His return from the unnamed feast, He being conscious of dangers threatening His own Person, left Galilee and went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles. From the capital and its neighbourhood, Jesus sent out the Seventy to prepare His way in the towns and villages of Peræa. He had promised the Twelve that they "should not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come";<sup>1</sup> this may be interpreted literally as an agreement to come back to Galilee after a few weeks, or it may be treated as an apocalyptic utterance to be fulfilled only in a spiritual manner. Professor Briggs throws out the suggestion that Jesus did return to Galilee and met the various evangelists at different places, and passing from group to group encouraged them in their mission.<sup>2</sup> Such traditional fragments as have been preserved of Christ's Personal Ministry during these weeks may be found imbedded in St. John's Jerusalem narrative and in the "great interpolation" of St. Luke's gospel. The very confusion of chronology may result in part from the overlapping of events and the widening ramifications of this new evangelism. It is surely a mistake to attribute the movements of Jesus to accident or chance; the progress of His ministry, from its start to the close, was marked by an intelligent, far-reaching and preconceived plan. See how, at the mid-point of His public career, emissaries of the Messiah's Kingdom were contemporaneously proceeding throughout Galilee, Peræa and Judæa! The land was covered with a network of evangelism; while Jesus kept constantly in touch with the missionaries, passing

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *New Light on the Life of Jesus*, p. 35.



from city to city, maintaining their attachment to Himself and heartening them in their toils. Probably most readers of the Gospels underestimate the amount of work Jesus accomplished in a few months; the *plan* of it all is missed in the abridged and broken records that have survived. But as it dawns upon us what it meant to initiate so great an enterprise as the establishment of God's Kingdom—to encounter the serried prejudices, unreasonable misconceptions and hostile conservatism, and yet in spite of every obstruction, in eighteen months to fill the land with messengers of a Spiritual Messianism—we become amazed that even Jesus was able to accomplish so much in so short a time. Men were not wholly unprepared: happily every age has a "seed" or "remnant" who wait for a leader and are ready to respond to a call for moral heroism; and though there be many who slumber when the clear summons rings forth, still a few will be found who catch the first gleam of light on the hill-tops, and who will feel in their souls the leap of nobler aspiration at the lifting up of the Ideal of Jesus.

6. Uncertainties concerning time, place and sequence of utterance ought not to divert attention from the central significance of the directions Jesus gave alike to the Twelve and the Seventy. The wonder is that any men should have felt prompted to follow a life of altruistic hardship. The secret lay in the spell of love by which Jesus had won their fealty. For His name's sake they were to endure the hatred of men, and to esteem all ties of flesh as subordinate to the bond of love between them and Himself. Although these messengers of the Reign of God had their own cherished ambitions and confused fancies of thrones and crowns, still the chief motive in their mission was their attachment to Jesus. He baffled their natural expectations of Messianic rule and brusquely rebuked their materialism; yet they persisted in connecting Him with the prophetic hopes of their nation, and at His bidding they took up poverty and trial as burdens to be borne for Him. There were others who fain would have followed Him, but their courage was not equal to the rigorous conditions of discipleship laid down by Jesus. The method of the Master was not that of a new philosophy; His first aim was not to promulgate a system of ideas; His religion was of being and doing, and was not sicklied over with the pale hue of intellectualism: yet He so identified Himself with "the Truth,"

that He could without egoism call men in His own name, and then launch them forth as ambassadors of the Reign of God. He was the avatar of the Heavenly Ideal, and at His bidding common men accepted the discipline and restraint of a spiritual militarism; and not all at once, but gradually, they were transformed by Him into heroes of faith.

7. The ethical spirit pervading Christ's instructions to these first Christian missionaries is identical with that with which Gautama imbued his followers; but in their message and equipment of power the disciples of Jesus are far removed from the pessimism of Buddhism. How quaint the simplicity of these men who were commissioned to announce the Kingdom of God! They were to make no preparation for their journey—to take nothing save a staff; or, as St. Luke says, not even a staff—no bread, no wallet, no money, no other coat than the one they were wearing, and only one pair of sandals. They were to be characterized by absolute simplicity. Upon entering a city they were to seek no luxurious abode, but only hospitality; and when invited to a home, they were to salute their hosts with the simple formula, "Peace be to this house!" They were to act upon the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and they were to rely upon the good-will of those who received their evangel. The Life of Jesus was their pattern. But they were to cherish no illusions: their message would act upon society as a fire and a sword; fierce opposition would be aroused, yet they were to be as fearless as good soldiers in the fight, and as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The children of peace will welcome the heralds of the Kingdom; but the sons of strife will tear them as ravening wolves. Those evangelists had but a meagre equipment; they were without erudition and social influence; their chief qualification was that they knew, believed in, and loved the Lord Jesus. Dr. Sanday says, "They were not to attempt to teach . . . but the announcement which they were to make by word of mouth was limited to the one formula with which both John and Jesus had begun: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'"<sup>1</sup> The declaration of this evangel, however, must have necessarily provoked inquiries, and the message would expand into a testimony of what things they had seen and heard of Jesus. Even at this early date, there must have begun to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 7.

flow a stream of tradition concerning Jesus which would mingle with the memories of thousands of listeners. And so these two missions created a crucial test of Israel's moral fitness to receive the new Kingdom, and Jesus charged His disciples to shake the dust of those cities that rejected them from their sandals as a symbol of Divine disapproval: this was the action of no personal pique or petty spleen, but a solemn protest against those who made "the great refusal."

8. Having detached His disciples from all material aids and external comforts, Jesus proceeded to invest them with the *charismata* of His spiritual Messianism, charging them to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers and cast out demons. Although the commission to raise the dead in St. Matthew is found in the best codices, we think it must have been an early gloss, since it does not seem likely that the Master would delegate such a stupendous power to immature disciples. We understand but little of the thaumaturgy of the New Testament; that it was morally conditioned and depended upon the exercise of faith is definitely stated. It is widely felt today, however, that we live on the bounds of a wonder-realm, which remains untraversed save by a few lonely pilgrims. It is irrefutable that the first propaganda of the Religion of Jesus was accompanied by preternatural phenomena and faith-healing, and the Lord Himself explicitly affirmed that the exorcism of evil spirits was a sign that the Kingdom had come nigh. St. Mark records that the Twelve executed their commission, preaching that men should repent, casting out devils and healing the diseased. While St. Matthew accentuates the healing ministry of this evangelism, the emphasis of Jesus fell upon preaching: "As ye go, preach." The disciples thus passed from the school to the great laboratory of the world. If it be that they but half-understood their own message, still the recital of their beloved Master's teaching and example would correct the materialism stirred by the watchword of the theocracy. No record remains of the results achieved by the itineration of the Twelve; but it is stated that the Seventy returned from their mission elated and excited at their success.

9. The study of this passage of evangelic history throws a flood of light upon the early propagandism of Christianity; the motive of these missionaries was enthusiasm for Jesus; because

of the impression He made upon them the most rigorous renunciation became easy, and endurance of hardship for His sake was to them a source of joy. Their message implied a lofty spiritual faith, and was destined to work out into the organization of a new society. The movement was initiatory and experimental, for it lacked the full-orbed revelation of the Divine Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In our modern applications of Christ's Charge to His Missionaries, we must discriminate between the abiding Ideal of discipleship and the letter of the rule. Although few will now advocate a literal imitation of the external life of those evangelists, all will approve every reproduction of their absolute sincerity and whole-hearted love. But a wrong is done to the ordinary priests, clergy and ministers of modern churches by identifying them with the apostles and disciples of that first period, since, without grave qualifications, no one can reckon the churches of Europe and America as identical with the simple organization of that earliest society of the followers of Jesus. Our churches have evolved from that protoplasmic period amid influences and conditions only partially Christian,<sup>1</sup> and no one supposes that they are based unreservedly upon the ideals and principles of the Sermon on the Mount and the instructions given to the Twelve and the Seventy. Very few of the ministers of the organized churches would make profession of complete renunciation; for the most part, they cling to interests and ambitions that are natural and legitimate. Still, within these same churches there are a few who hear and obey the call to imitate their Lord; and while they do not conform in every detail to these missionary instructions, they strive to embody the ideal of self-renunciation: they bear the Cross daily; their lives exhale the aroma of complete consecration, and they are the salt of the

<sup>1</sup> "When the Church was founded, there was no new world created, as a stage for Christians to act upon. They were still to be men, each with a different face and figure and character. . . . Life was with them to be no poetical dream, but, in its main circumstances and conditions, exactly as commonplace, as real, as long, as each of us finds it. Their Christian principles were not to be like propositions of Euclid or legal formulæ, things to be thought of by themselves and paraded on certain occasions; but they were to work *in* and *under* the everyday realities of life, high and low; to hide themselves in all feelings and actions, to possess and inform character, to leaven insensibly whatever stirs and warms men's hearts. They were not meant for a gala robe, but for a working-day dress, and that for no fancy labour, but for the rough and dusty encounters of this (outwardly) very matter-of-fact and unromantic world." R. W. Church, *Essays and Reviews*, p. 120f.

earth and the light of the world. We have seen that the method of Jesus consisted not only in preaching to the multitudes, but also in calling a few disciples to heroic service, and imparting to them the treasures of His teaching. Likewise, in this age of contrasting luxury and need, and of social disintegrations and reconstructions, the Lord's summons may come again to chosen individuals to give up everything for His name's sake. For those who receive no such call, the personal problem remains to determine how, amid life's ordinary routine, one may inwardly realize and outwardly exemplify the Spirit of Christ.





BOOK IV  
THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN  
JESUS AND THE HIERARCHY



## CHAPTER I

### THE EXAMINATION AND DEFENCE OF JESUS

1. IN St. John's Gospel, the events and discourses of Jesus' life are grouped around the great Jewish feasts which occasioned several of the recorded visits made to the capital by Him and His disciples. It is, however, difficult to introduce an order of sequence and connection into the narrative of the Fourth Gospel; for the guiding aim of the writer was to prove and illustrate the sublime thesis of the new faith that Jesus was the Son and Word of God; and, in executing this task, he grouped his materials independently of chronology, so that it is uncertain now whether he may not have referred to the same feasts in the various parts of the Gospel. "Can we be sure," asks Dr. Briggs, "that the three Passovers mentioned were all different Passovers? Can we be sure that the narrative of St. John's Gospel is chronological? Tatian did not think so, for he puts the cleansing of the temple and the interview of Jesus with Nicodemus at the last Passover. The Synoptists all place the cleansing of the temple at the last Passover; and that is, for many reasons, the most probable time of its occurrence. Jesus would not have forced the issue between Himself and the Sanhedrim, at the beginning of His Ministry in Jerusalem, when, even according to John, He prudently postponed the crisis as long as possible."<sup>1</sup> If there be such doubt about the Passover mentioned, it will surprise no one to meet with endless uncertainty concerning the undefined feast of chapter five. It has been agreed severally that this festival must have been a Passover, or the Pentecost, or the Tabernacles: yet, further, it has been identified with the Day of Atonement, also with the Feast of Dedication, while several modern scholars believe it to have been the Feast of Purim. Dr. Westcott<sup>2</sup> has found in the discourse "a remarkable illustration in the thoughts of the Festival of Trumpets." At this feast the miraculous giving of the Law

<sup>1</sup> *New Light on the Life of Jesus*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> John v. 1, 3, Additional Notes, p. 93.

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with the sound of the trumpet was celebrated, and "on this day, according to a very early Jewish tradition, God holds a judgment of men." Whether it was Purim in the spring (March) of the second year of Christ's Ministry, or in the autumn (September) at the Feast of Trumpets, or one of the other Jewish festivals, does not affect the clear evidence that the cure of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda, and the defence of this Sabbath miracle, constitute a great crucial moment in the Messianic Epiphany of Jesus. It was the beginning of a struggle—a struggle between Jesus and the hierarchy which did not close till it culminated in the tragedy of the Cross.

2. The unsolicited miracle on the Sabbath-day at Bethesda was an unmistakable challenge by Jesus of the pretensions of the hard, superficial religiosity of orthodox Judaism. It is undoubtedly a matter of surprise to us, that neither Josephus nor any writer of New Testament times has mentioned the institution of this Pool of Healing, with its preternatural associations; but then readers have long since learned that the silence of certain ancient authors cannot be treated as a disproof of positive statements found in others. The Fourth Gospel alone records this miracle; but the fact that St. John supplies us with accounts of so many trustworthy incidents does somewhat prepare the mind to accept narratives of which he is the sole witness. Of miracles generally, we have said that the impression of Jesus is so unique that in the records of His works we find naught incompatible with His character; and in regard to this particular miracle, there seems no vestige of fictitious invention. At Bethesda Jesus appeared as the Friend of diseased humanity—as one commissioned by God to heal the bodies of men, and so make manifest, even in the physical realm, the operation of God's Sovereignty. But while the incident is full of attractiveness in that it gives a disclosure of the native benignancy of Jesus, it has a value totally different as throwing light upon His attitude toward the established religion. With great boldness He repudiates the external formalism of Judaism, and boldly affirms by His action an independence of ceremonial restraints. Jesus became the aggressor, and deliberately set at defiance the sabbatarianism of the age. There was no urgency in this man's case; a day's delay would have mattered little to one who had suffered thirty and eight years, and Jesus might have promised to cure him after



sunset had the man solicited Him. But we cannot even proffer the man's request as an apology; the simple fact is, that Jesus was in the habit of doing these things on the Sabbath-day. It appears as a part of a settled plan; we cannot soften the aggression by treating it as an accident, or undesigned breach of the law, for Jesus was only repeating in Jerusalem what He had deliberately done in other places. From the many-sided Ministry of Jesus, it is easy to omit some important feature; but any such omission results in a misconstruing even of other features which are acknowledged. Many there have been who delight in the gentleness and humility that drew to His side the sinful and sick who sought forgiveness and healing; but they seem to forget that Jesus was strong as well as wise, daring as well as compassionate, stern as truly as He was tender. He did not shrink from making public protests against that hard spirit in Judaism which menaced the noblest instincts of humanity. He shunned all false compromises, and avoided mixing the wine of His new teaching with the dogmatism of rabbinism. Some teachers there are who, to make peace with well-known prejudices, mix the new and the old; but Jesus refused to dilute His doctrines by any infusion of accepted error; He would not tincture the white light of His ethical teaching with the hues of popular thought. The hardness and superficiality of legalism were warping the better mind of Israel; the wells of humanity were poisoned by an ostentation of religious ceremony and a scrupulosity that encouraged hypocrisy. Because of these things, Jesus chose the Sabbath-day for the miracle at Bethesda, and then proceeded to accentuate His violation of the Law by commanding the healed man to take up his pallet and carry it away. The prophet Jeremiah had said,<sup>1</sup> "Thus saith the Lord; take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath-day." But when the deep, true religion of Israel was in danger of being obliterated by materialism; when piety was menaced by pedantry, and humane feelings were trampled upon by traditionalists in their worship of the letter,—then Jesus asserted authoritatively the dignity and power of the Son of Man over outward rites and temporary symbols. He might have told the healed man to wait till the Sabbath was past before he carried away his mattress;

<sup>1</sup>Jer. xvii. 21, 22.

but the Lord Jesus deliberately set Himself to loosen the rigidity of the Sabbath laws. He forced Himself upon the attention of the Sanhedrim as a rival authority: hitherto the occasional opposition He had encountered had come from the jealous provincial rabbins; but henceforth He was to be subjected to the sleepless espionage and dogged by the relentless hostility of the highest religious authority of the capital city.

3. Jesus' visit to Jerusalem, during the unnamed feast, constituted a crisis in His Ministry; the conflict which had begun in Galilee was now transferred to Jerusalem. At this period the latent prejudice and dislike of Jewish officials crystallized in definite hostility; and there emerged a policy of antagonism which had for its goal the destruction of the Son of God. Such opposition to One whom posterity has vindicated as the avatar of moral goodness, and whom multitudes have worshipped as divine,—an opposition pursued by men who were patriots, and represented national religion, who were not satisfied till Jesus was crucified,—seems at times almost inexplicable; so that an intelligible account of its origin and growth is difficult to attain. In treating of problems of Divine predestination and human free-will in relation to the Crucifixion of Jesus, the mind beats its wings against the iron bars of the universe, and we come at length to recognize limitations of thought which no finite intellect can overcome. And yet it ought to be possible to present a rational account of the history of the conflict between the authorities of Judaism and Jesus—to discover the motives, impulses and plans of those who hounded Him to death, since these are the phenomena of traceable history. The stories that Xenophon and Plato tell concerning the trial and death of Socrates show how conservative and narrow men, without being wicked, may so fear the disintegrating influence of a great sage upon the community that they come at last to look upon his death as needful for the continuance of the state. The official representatives of Judaism were men of patriotic feeling, and observant of all the strict rules of their religion; but they were constitutionally unable to appreciate the free, broad humanity of Jesus, who claimed to be the Christ. Narrow traditionalists as they were, they could not help looking with suspicion and dislike upon the originality and spontaneity of the Nazarene Teacher: then, too, He was not only alien in temper and genius from themselves,

but He deliberately threatened to dissolve the institutions of their nation and the privileges of the ruling class. "For this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, because He did these things on the Sabbath."<sup>1</sup>

4. The narrative of the Bethesda miracle is too familiar to be recapitulated; and its homiletic purport may be passed by. We may pause, however, to remark upon the surprise every reader feels that the healed man should have turned informer; but instead of attributing this act to malignancy or cowardice, it may be supposed that its latent motive and aim was to provide the Healer with an opportunity of defending the seeming breach of the Sabbath, and so to make allies even of the remonstrants themselves. Passing from the incident to the discourse which follows, we are all struck by the total contrast it affords to the form of Christ's teaching in the Synoptic reports. The causes of two such different styles of address may have been in part the versatility of Jesus, also His discrimination of differences of mental calibre and training in the popular audiences of Galilee and the professional classes of Jerusalem; then, too, we need not fear to acknowledge the idiosyncrasies and distinctive bias of each of the evangelists. Although Xenophon gives a much plainer, matter-of-fact account of Socrates than Plato, we find substantial historicity and congruity in both writers. Whether the present form of the Fourth Gospel be due to the revision of the Johannine tradition by one versed in Alexandrian philosophy, or whether it be the peculiar style of St. John himself, the conviction prevails among many that the accounts are substantially genuine, and that at points we touch imperishable fragments of the Master's speech—fragments which, boulder-like, have refused to be disintegrated or dissolved in the molten mass of the author's brooding thought. There is no fundamental, convincing reason against the general Christian belief that this profound, theosophical *apologia* may represent one of the poles of Christ's thought, as the Sermon on the Mount may equally represent another. "It is a different Christ that is here represented, it is said. But this is a difficulty decisively set aside by Christendom, which has always found it easy to form one consistent portrait from the four accounts."<sup>2</sup> He who, according to the Synoptic Gospels, justified the exercise of a beneficent

<sup>1</sup> John v. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Dods, *The Bible, Its Origin and Nature*, p. 187.

humanity on the Sabbath-day by recalling the incident of David's eating the shew-bread, and by suggesting the analogy of pity's instinctive impulse to lift a fallen animal out of a pit, to a different audience might well have drawn a parallel between the Heavenly Father's ceaseless activity during the Sabbath which follows the ineffable days of creation and His own healing ministry on earth.

5. The momentous significance we attach to the inquiry to which Jesus was subjected at this time in Jerusalem, is derived from the fact that it was the first authorized and authoritative investigation into His conduct and claims. His inquisitors belonged to the privileged Sanhedrim; they may have formed a standing committee of the national council, and the occasion may have assumed the character of a semi-formal process of examination. It was no casual, incidental dialogue which sprang up unforeseen and passed without consequences; the challenge flung down by the act of Jesus was taken up by the hierarchy officially, and followed by an ecclesiastical inquiry. Our feeling of the probability that this view is correct is heightened by the harmony and illumination such an hypothesis introduces into the succeeding months of Christ's career. Until this crisis, it had remained an open possibility that He might win the approval and sanction of the central authority of Israel; for the Sanhedrim had looked at first not unsympathetically upon John the Baptist, and had even sent a deputation to ask if he were the "Coming One." It could not be ignored that, although John disclaimed all such pretensions for himself, he designated Jesus as the Divinely commissioned man to establish the New Kingdom. Those officials had observed the ministry of Jesus and had slowly apprehended the fact that there was something in the movement initiated that could never be grafted into Judaism; they felt that Jesus had begun a spiritual revolution, and to their astonishment He came even to Zion itself and compelled widespread attention by His deliberate performance of this miracle of healing on the Sabbath. The Sanhedrim could not ignore such a challenge, and they exercised their political and religious prerogatives to demand from Jesus some explanation. In this fifth chapter of St. John, therefore, we may read the defence or *apologia* offered by Jesus to the inquisitorial committee of the Sanhedrim. The occasion constituted not only a



crisis in the development of the Ministry of Jesus, but a great national opportunity in the providential history of Israel. Dr. Westcott says,<sup>1</sup> "Now the conflict begins which issues in the Passion. Step by step faith and unbelief are called out in a parallel development. The works and words of Christ become a power for the revelation of men's thoughts. The main scene of this saddest of all conceivable tragedies is Jerusalem. The crises of its development are the national festivals. And the whole controversy is gathered round three miracles."

6. The record of this examination is marked by the author's peculiarities of thought and expression; the gyrations which belong to his style tend to conceal the successive movements: hence, one is apt to miss the unexpected turns of dialogue and subtle transitions of thought, especially as the answers of Jesus are preserved without the particular questions that evoked them. But even in this inquiry, Jesus is the Master of His interrogators; He leads them where they would not willingly go, and transfers their thought from the externals of ecclesiasticism to the realm of faith and experimental truth. The theme is not capable of facile and superficial discussion; Jesus moves in worlds unrealized by His hearers, and His words are pregnant with transcendent truths. The light of His self-disclosure prevents us from accepting the judgement that He was simply a socialist, born before the age was ready for Him. Such a representation is no more true than that which turns Him into "the high-priest of property and smug respectability." In our consideration of the Sermon on the Mount and of the commission of the Twelve and the Seventy, we discovered Christ's distrust of wealth and His advocacy of a simple life for those who establish the Kingdom of Heaven; but we must not treat half-truths as whole ones, nor emphasize with unbalanced extravagance merely one phase of His work to the exclusion of other parts. Our task is to seek the inmost secret of His life, and through that to comprehend His manifold ministry, although such a quest may lead us into paths of thought oft discredited by those who are content to know Jesus as a great revolutionist, anarchist or agitator. In an investigation of His work conducted by the authorized representatives of the national Jewish religion, Jesus might justifiably lay bare the underlying postulates and ultimate truths of His relation to God and the world.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Westcott, *John's Gospel*, chap. v., Introductory Note.



7. The examiners of Jesus asked, first of all, by what authority He annulled the old Sabbath laws and traditions. The passing breach of Sabbath regulations may seem a trifling and flimsy pretext for the malignant opposition henceforth shown towards Jesus; but, as one reflects upon the integral and vital nature of the Sabbath institution in Judaism, it becomes clear that the hieratic officials did not overestimate the gravity of the challenge offered by the miracle at Bethesda. Jesus deliberately aimed a blow at the elaborate and petty puerilities of an external religion which had become oppressive to humanity, and which displaced the first principles of true religion. He fought for the emancipation of the spirit of man from the thralldom of pedantic legalism. Just as, on the Mount, Jesus had set forth man's righteousness as the imitation of Divine philanthropy, so now, in reply to His questioners, He claims that His own works are modelled upon the ceaseless ministry of the Heavenly Father. But this vindication of His miracle afforded another charge against Him—viz. that He called God His Father, and so made Himself equal with God. The horror of these Sanhedrists at what they considered His blasphemy only led Jesus to reiterate His Divine Sonship;—not as common to all men, for with quiet dignity He enumerates the prerogatives of God to raise the dead, to impart life, and claims that like powers have been delegated to Himself. Judgement of men—a function of the old theocratic Kingship—has been committed to the Son, so that men should honour Him as they do the Father. To refuse to honour the Son is to withhold that tribute from God who sent Him. When the vastness and solemnity of these Messianic pretensions led His hearers to murmur their scepticism and disapproval, instead of abating His high claims, Jesus reaffirms them with the pendant warning that the alternatives of external life and a judgement of condemnation hinge upon men's acceptance or rejection of His Revelation.

8. The enunciation at this point of Christ's Ministry of a doctrine of the Resurrection, has excited a suspicion that the hand of a redactor has wrought upon the apostolic tradition, hardening and materializing the words of Jesus into a narrow dogma of "the last things." Critics of this school imagine that the quickening of the dead referred originally to the moral and spiritual impulse which Jesus was conscious of imparting; that the figure of a resuscitation has been too literally interpreted by

minds at a lower plane of thought than that occupied by Jesus. In all such questions as these, the judgement must be potently influenced by culture, environment and mental bias. Experience teaches us that it is as difficult to refute the dogmas of ultra-spiritualism as those of materialism; in all such cases the appeal is necessarily subjective. Those who approach these matters with the assumption that Jesus differed in no essential way from other human beings—that He was Divine only as all men are Sons of God—are driven, by the inherent logic of their premises, to exclude all actions and attributes that could not be exercised by other good men. Not only the Jesus of St. John, but also the picture of Him in the Synoptics, must be adjudged imaginary and exaggerated beyond all credence by those who consciously or unconsciously make their naturalistic prejudices the standards of criticism. Our only answer to such criticism is that the Jesus of the Gospels cannot be reduced to such dimensions as are demanded by naturalism, until we entirely deny the trustworthiness of the only writings that supply the materials wherewith a mental picture of Him can be formed. Over against this criticism of antipathy must be set our belief that even in the Fourth Gospel are found memories which could have come only from some apostolic witness. There are sublime affirmations in this narrative of His trial which reverberate in the moral reason as truth alone can do. It did not, for example, lie within the compass of human invention, in the Primitive Church, to suggest that Divine judgement was delegated to Jesus *because He was the Son of Man*. Jesus derived His authority for judging men from God Himself, and asserts that His aim in exercising this Divine prerogative is to do the Will of God.

9. Those incredulous inquisitors interrupted Jesus with clamorous demands for His credentials, and scornfully taunted Him with testifying of Himself. At length, when the Babel of invective, doubt and menace subsided, the Master disclaimed all desire that His words should be accepted without sufficient testimony. He reminded them of their deputation to John—that burning and shining lamp around which they had swarmed like moths for a brief while, and that John had borne witness of Him as One divinely designated for a great work in Israel. Jesus next pointed to the works which He did—miracles of healing and moral transformations: these were evidences that the

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Heavenly Father had sent Him. As for Himself, the only testimony that is valid and cogent for His own heart is that which God gives Him in His inmost consciousness. This last allusion to evidence so intangible as that of an inner voice of the Spirit excited their scorn, and they retorted that they had neither heard the voice of God nor at any time had they seen His form. This Sadducean jibe was treated by Jesus as the confession of spiritual blindness and deafness, and this defect was due alone to their refusal to have the Word of God dwelling in their minds. Had they cherished a genuine love of truth, they would have been morally prepared to accept Him as God's sent One. When they professed to prefer the oracles of eternal life in the Scriptures to the dubious testimony of an unauthorized teacher, Jesus replied that those very Scriptures bore witness concerning Himself; He was the eternal Word; the historical revelation to Israel led up to God's manifestation in His Son. "All this revealing history, with the varying experience of God's people under His hand, and the various redemption institutions which kept alive the knowledge of God already won; all *that* through which God made His presence felt and His attitude known, prepared for and culminated in the consummate revelation made in Christ."<sup>1</sup> Finally, Jesus puts His examiners upon their trial and diagnoses the fatal malady of their souls. Instead of being animated by sincere love of God, they were seeking repute and honour from men; the perverting blinding mistake of their lives was worldliness. Had He come in His own name, using the methods of the world, they would have received Him; but they had rejected Him because He came in the name of His Father. It was not necessary, however, for Jesus to accuse them of unbelief; for Moses himself, in whom they so ardently professed to believe, was their accuser before God, since the whole trend of revelation from the great Lawgiver onward had converged upon Jesus.

10. This examination of the conduct and claims of the Christ drew forth His great *apologia*, which is charged with the idealism and spirituality of the perfect Man. We can only testify that such knowledge and certainty as Jesus manifested appear to us as founded upon the direct abiding vision of His Spirit. He possessed an interior and lively apprehension of the realities

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Dods, *The Bible, Its Origin and Nature*, p. 77.

of the Spirit: the words of Louis de Ponte recur to the mind as we think of Jesus: "As the body has its five exterior senses with which it perceives the visible and delectable things of this life, and takes experience of them, so the Spirit, with its faculties of understanding and will, has five interior acts proportionable to these senses, . . . with which it perceives the invisible and delectable things of Almighty God, and takes experience of them; from which springs the experimental knowledge of God, which incomparably exceeds all the knowledge that proceeds of our reasonings, as the sweetness of honey is much better known by tasting a little of it than by using much reasoning to know it."<sup>1</sup> Too often in man's life the material aspect of phenomena shuts out the spiritual; but the earth and sky were translucent to Jesus; He saw in the world the works of the Heavenly Father, whose operations never cease; He contemplated God sustaining the universe and quickening dead things into living forms. There are others besides Jesus who catch glimpses of the ultimate idealism of our world; but the sordid selfishness, the commonplace traditions and the dusky impurity of our hearts, make an impenetrable mask which hides the Divine Presence. Jesus, the unique Son of God, lived ever in perfect, moral harmony and filial intimacy with the Father, so that a constant ray from the Spiritual Sun smote upon His inner vision. Beholding so clearly the works and purposes of the Father Jesus joyously subordinated all His activities to the Divine Plan, and accounting Himself God's executor in our history, He pursued a double mission—to beget in men the higher life of the Spirit and to judge the world. Jesus avowed that His authority and power were derivative, and that the successive steps of His Ministry were determined by His intuitive knowledge of the Will of God. The Life of Jesus in our world is a miniature copy of the Life of God in the universe. He sought to emancipate men from every bondage, whether of sin or of religious legalism, and to establish in every life the autonomy of the Spirit.

II. Apart from all interpretations of this Johannine theosophy, as some term it, the incident of this miracle and examination of Jesus stands out in His Ministry as a crucial moment—the parting of ways. The future attitude of the hierarchy toward Jesus is summed up by the Evangelist as an intention to kill

<sup>1</sup> De Ponte, *Meditations on the Mysteries of the Holy Faith*, vol. i., p. 59.

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Him. Henceforth, the conflict between Jesus as the Messiah of the Spirit and the rulers of Judaism in their bondage to the letter must go on until the Cross is reached. Jesus may have won some secret friends in the Sanhedrim, but they were too few to affect materially the course of the conflict. At a preliminary examination, the authorities could only warn Him against the dangerous issues of His Ministry; but in their minds a silent judgement was pronounced against Him with a determination to bring about His death. The only way for Jesus to escape such a doom was by compromise or by the surrender of His Messianic pretensions; but neither alternative could He adopt. History has taken up the judgement of the Sanhedrim upon Jesus, and the hostility meted out to Him is the severest sentence of condemnation ever passed upon itself. The censure passed upon Jesus has gibbeted His inquisitors for all generations. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."



## CHAPTER II

### THE EGOISM OF JESUS

I. THE struggle with the hierarchy became pronounced and definite in the middle part of Christ's Ministry, and at this point our chronology is altogether tentative. From the unnamed feast to the winter Festival of the Dedication affords a period of several months; while a great part of the Gospel records may rightly belong to this interval of time, yet all certainty of time-sequence is lost to us. A general characteristic of our Lord's Ministry during these months, however, was manifestly a growing emphasis of egoistic claim; and this fact supplies a test-principle by which to judge the appositeness of many of the incidents, and to give them a presumptive place in the ground-plan of the ministry in St. Mark. The course of events in St. Luke's gospel, while agreeing with St. Mark's order at the earlier and later stages, is interrupted by the great interpolation<sup>1</sup>—a composite mass of incidents collected by the author from eye-witnesses and fugitive memoirs and related without chronological sequence. The solemn introduction of this interpolation has led many to suppose that it covers the last three or four months only of our Lord's life, and records slow progress towards Jerusalem;<sup>2</sup> but careful analysis suggests that it contains fragmentary accounts of at least three separate journeys toward the capital.<sup>3</sup> Even more difficult still is the task of finding links and connections between the material of the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics, and it is only by ignoring the theological scheme of St. John and transferring parts of his record, according to inherent probabilities, that his reminiscences can be fitted into the Marcan framework at all. Our method of procedure may appear to some altogether too subjective for reliance: however, we make no pretensions to certitude, but are content to test its validity by the inherent probability of the results.

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 51-xviii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Plummer, *in loco.*, chap. ix., 51ff.

<sup>3</sup> Wieseler, *Chron. Syn.*, iv., Eng. Ed., pp. 289ff.

2. We have discovered no authoritative facts to aid us in deciding the vexed question of the unnamed feast; it may have been the Purim in the spring, or it may have been the time of Pentecost, about June. In either case we should place the miracle of feeding the five thousand in the following spring, so that there was an interval of many months, giving adequate time for the Galilean tour of the Twelve which Jesus so solemnly commissioned them to execute.<sup>1</sup> Professor Briggs,<sup>2</sup> however, has contributed the valuable suggestion that, having given this commission, Jesus journeyed southward, taking with Him the "Sons of Thunder," James and John, who had friends at Jerusalem, sending them back again to resume their evangelism after the feast. If, as the same writer conjectures, there were frequent visitations to Jesus by the various groups of disciples all through the mission period, the Lord must have kept in touch with all of them, affording the occasional encouragement and stimulus they would need; and, further, such coming and going of the several disciples would account for various streams of oral testimony relating to the ministry of this period, and for confusions, overlappings and omissions in our surviving Gospels. We must remind ourselves, too, that although topical interest led us to connect the two missions in our discussion, yet it was probably not until the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn of the second year that Jesus sent seventy evangelists into Peræa. At the close of this later feast, the enmity of the hierarchy to Jesus became so threatening that He left the temple and sought temporary concealment—perhaps at Bethany.<sup>3</sup> During the Feast of Tabernacles Nicodemus was constrained, by his feeling of justice, to put in a plea for a more temperate hearing of the claims of Jesus, and thus drew upon himself a suspicion that he favoured the Galilean pretender.<sup>4</sup> Whether the secret interview which Nicodemus sought with Jesus by night be placed before or after this incident, may be left to the reader's judgement; although it may be pointed out that the effect of his intervention in the Sanhedrim gave a reason for courting obscurity in any personal dealings he might have with Jesus; and the character of our Lord's words to the timid senator is singularly harmonious with His egoistic tone and claims at the later period.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke ix. 6; Mark vi. 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup> *New Light*, pp. 44, 47.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John viii. 59; Luke x. 38.

<sup>4</sup> John vii. 50.

3. From the unnamed feast and miracle at Bethesda to the memorable happenings at the Maccabean Feast of the Dedication, there can be traced an intensified emphasis upon the spiritual nature of the Kingdom on the one side and a growing boldness of accentuation upon the centrality claimed for His own person on the other. In a swift and brief review of many incidents, we shall pass by important truths and inferences in order that we may dwell upon the steps leading up to the climax of Christ's self-disclosure,—tracing the deepening note of personal authority claimed by Jesus, and the resultant struggle growing ever sterner, until at last the blind man is formally excommunicated by the Pharisees, because Jesus gave him his sight. While in Galilee, Jesus had for the most part contented Himself with announcing the Kingdom; in Judæa He transferred the weight of His teaching to the setting forth of Himself as the King. The new theocracy was to be independent of earthly and temporal conditions: it could bear no likeness to the reign of Herod or of Cæsar; its territory is in the soul, and man's citizenship in it possessed him of everlasting life. Notwithstanding His high claims, Jesus had to create a new conception of Kingship—of one who saves and instructs His people. "And I cannot help thinking, Socrates, that the form of the Divine Shepherd is even higher than that of a King."<sup>1</sup> Jesus announced the elevation of the Son of Man both at the Feast of Tabernacles and in speaking to Nicodemus; <sup>2</sup> "when He should be lifted up," men would recognize His authority. The late master of Balliol has written: "The ancient Stoics spoke of a wise man, perfect in virtue, who was fancifully said to be a king; but neither they nor Plato had arrived at the conception of a person who was also a law." But Jesus sought to impress His Personality upon His disciples, so that He Himself might be the inspiring and constraining power and law of their lives. Not in support of any theological dogma or church would we trace this phase of His Ministry, but simply that we may perceive the force and character of the Person behind all the creeds and institutions of the Church. Our examination of the incidents and doctrines of this period may involve a certain amount of repetition; but there will be no redundancy if we are helped to understand the central, authoritative place in the Kingdom of God claimed by the Lowly Nazarene. The fact of this

<sup>1</sup> Plato's *Statesman*, Jowett's trans., p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 14; viii. 28.

royal pretension on the part of Jesus was fully recognized by the late Sir J. R. Seeley: "As with Socrates argument is everything and personal authority nothing, so with Christ personal authority is all in all, and argument altogether unemployed. As Socrates is never tired of depreciating himself and dissembling his own superiority to those with whom he converses, so Christ perpetually and constantly exalts Himself. As Socrates firmly denies what all admit, and explains away what the oracle had announced—viz. his own superior wisdom; so Christ steadfastly asserts what many were not prepared to admit—viz. His own absolute superiority to all men, and His natural title to universal royalty."<sup>1</sup>

4. Even the episode connected with His brothers' reproof,<sup>2</sup> which Renan rightly characterized as "a small historical treasure," discloses to us the amazing egoism of Jesus. These "brethren of the Lord" may have been real brothers, or half-brothers, or only cousins, since in the East the term "brother" is used in the loosest fashion; but we think it not improbable that these men were the sons of Mary, and that they had been brought up in the home of Jesus. The natural prejudices engendered by familiarity caused them not merely to discredit His Messiahship, not only to grudge Him the merit of superiority, but also to impugn His sanity. Still, the miracles of Jesus had at last made an impression on their gross understandings, and they come urging Him to go up to the Feast of the Tabernacles, and there dazzle and win the influential citizens by a display of His power. Who that has read the life of Schiller has not smiled at the Duke of Wurtemberg's proposal to help the young poet to improve his literary style? Yet such proffered patronage, however ludicrous, is not to be compared with the vanity of those brothers of Jesus who would have counselled Jesus that their own ambitions might be realized! In their little cave of family prejudice and pride, they lived thinking the shadows to be real, while their great Brother stood on the mount and swept far horizons with vision all undimmed by local feelings and national expectations. On no lines of earth-born ambition did Jesus move, but He followed the directivity of the Holy Spirit in His own pure heart. Neither the advice nor the implied reproach affected His designs: with grave, subdued irony He answered that His time had not come; but they, being what they were, incurred no hatred from the

<sup>1</sup> *Ecce Homo*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> John vii. 1-10.



world, and so might go up to Jerusalem at any time. That Jesus should have seemed to say that He was not going up to the festival has caused no little perplexity;<sup>1</sup> but, for ourselves, we are sure that He practised no duplicity, and that is enough. The recurrence of that allusion to *His time*<sup>2</sup> once again conveys the impression that Jesus was conscious of the supernatural providence regulating the course of His Ministry, so that He ever moved along the way marked out with unwavering and unhasting tread. As we retrace His steps in history, we discover the clear unfolding of a wondrous plan in which the graduated assumption of Messianic authority and the processive unveiling of His own Ego played a part as important as His verbal instruction and His gracious works. Although He would not allow His brothers in the flesh to push their private schemes of aggrandizement through Him, He had really set His face toward Jerusalem, as there, He felt, it was fitting that He should declare Himself once again; but He resolutely shunned uninstructed enthusiasm and designed to travel with two or three friends, "as it were in secret."

5. Travelling thus along the Samaritan route, Jesus sent messengers to secure Him a place of rest at one of the villages—perhaps Engannim, the Fountain of Gardens. At this season, however, race prejudices were active, and seeing that Jesus was going to Jerusalem, the Samaritan villages refused to receive Him. It is evident that the disciples themselves attributed their own notions of Messianic dignity to their Master, and, being angry at the insult offered, they now urged Him to call down fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable people. Whether the answer recorded was really spoken by Jesus or not, it gives an appropriate explication of His mind: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." So far was such a conception of Christ's Ministry beyond the highest thoughts of the disciples, that it appears most probable that He Himself enunciated the soteriological idea of His service to men. If this be so, the transcendent egoism, which characterizes the middle stage of the progress of Jesus, is conjoined with the widest humanitarian altruism. The lifting up of Jesus was a means to one of

<sup>1</sup> Commentators suggest that *οὐκ* ought to be *οὐπω*.

<sup>2</sup> *ὁ καιρὸς ὁ ἐμὸς*.



the divinest of ends—the reconciliation of man with God. And it is not irrelevant to reflect that this incident discovers to us also the mind of the disciples, that it can be easily conjectured the type of wonder-works which they would have been prone to suggest; also what the character of the Gospel records would have been had they sprung from fictitious inventions of the followers of Jesus.

6. The delay of Jesus to make an appearance at the beginning of the feast had aroused disappointment and evoked discussions concerning His claims and character. Some said, "He is a good man," but others replied, "No, He is leading the multitudes astray." At the time of this Feast of the Tabernacles, opinion about Jesus was still in a state of transition; the hierarchy had not yet sought openly to influence the pilgrims to assume hostility toward Him. We may pause at this point to comment upon the criticism of St. John's record of this visit,—that the author or redactor has changed the historical Son of Man into a theological ideal. Some do not hesitate to charge upon St. John's gospel a distorted and unreliable account of Jesus, softening the accusation by attributing the transformation in part to the lapse of time between the occurrence of events and the writing of them down. We feel the justice of Dr. Dods' reply to this: "Too much may very easily be made of the distance in time between the events and their record. A second generation is sometimes spoken of as if it arrived all at once, and in a day displaced and abolished the first generation, like changing guard at a military post, or like the sudden displacement of day by night in the tropics. But many persons who had seen Jesus in Jerusalem and Galilee must have survived till the end of the century; many must have been of an age to check the romancing of the evangelists, if such there was, by their own knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Great as are the differences between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, they need not be exaggerated; and, as a matter of fact, the common intelligence of the reader has found no fatal incongruity between the earlier and later portraits of Jesus. The glowing heat of apostolic mysticism has not blurred the outlines of the Son of Man; St. John's Incarnate Logos is one with the Jesus of St. Mark. It is too often forgotten that the Synoptic Gospels were written *because* men believed in the Pauline Christ, with

<sup>1</sup> Dods, *The Bible, Its Origin and Nature*, p. 183.

whom the Johannine Lord is identical. The account given by St. John, of the Divine Son's self-disclosure at the Feast of the Tabernacles, affords an historic and rational basis for the sublime Christology propagated within a few years of the Crucifixion. If the claims and affirmations put into the mouth of Jesus at this feast be substantially correct—and St. John's witness is rendered the more probable in that these things are implied in the whole presentation of Jesus in the other three gospels—then St. Paul's doctrine of Christ is historically explicable and trustworthy as articulating the self-consciousness of Jesus.

7. The arrival of Jesus aroused into dire activity the antagonism of both priests and Pharisees. One feels that none but a contemporary could have borne witness to an alliance so pregnant with fateful issues as that which drew Sadducees and Pharisees together. At first the Sanhedrim appointed officers to arrest Jesus at some fitting opportunity, but His increasing popularity made the men afraid. Nicodemus remonstrated with the other counsellors: "Doth our law judge the man before it hear Him and know what He doeth?" The true nature of the struggle which was in process between Jesus and the rulers was uncomprehended by the common people, and some were shocked when they heard Jesus charge His enemies with seeking His death, attributing such suspicions to melancholia. Opinions were divided, and momentous questions sprang to men's lips as they listened to Jesus: "Who art Thou?" "Whence art Thou?" "Whither goest Thou?" "Will He kill Himself?" There were those who inclined to think that Jesus must be the herald of Messiah's coming, and others queried if the Messiah Himself could do greater miracles than those Jesus wrought. It was the season of debate: men were agitated and tossed by doubts, as the waves of the sea in a storm; they could remain scornfully indifferent no longer; they felt that the moment was nigh when they would be compelled to take sides for or against Him. It was essentially and necessarily a period when Jesus must give full disclosure of His real claims. This change in men's attitude to Him forced Jesus to adjust Himself to the new conditions, and we observe in the record a displacement of the winsomeness of His early manner by the consciousness of majestic authority. He saw the inevitable issue of the hierarchy's hostility to Himself and began to allude in a veiled way to His death. His teaching

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at this juncture was no dead creed, no abstract reasoning about existence; it was, rather, the unfolding of a life of absolute obedience to the Will of the Father: men morally unready could not receive His Truth, but in minds prepared it wrought emancipation from sin. Jesus felt this need for moral preparation in His hearers, and plainly told the leaders of Israel that they rejected Him because fleshly habits and ambitions had perverted their judgement.

8. The culmination of egoism was reached on the last great day of the feast, when Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and let him drink that believeth in Me: as saith the Scriptures, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." A little later Jesus declared to His amazed hearers, "I am the Light of the World." Allusions to the ceremonial symbolism of the feast must not obscure the magnitude of these metaphors. Jesus recognized that man's life is a pilgrimage, sometimes through an inferno, sometimes up the steep mount of cleansing; but He offers Himself as the satisfaction for soul-thirst, and as the light of man's way. The mystery of His claims was further deepened by the saying, "Before Abraham was, I am." Egoism such as this would seem incredible if it were not that all the implications of the Gospels authenticate these claims. One "aerolite from the Johannine heaven"<sup>1</sup> is found imbedded in the Synoptics: "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one understands the Son but the Father. Nor does anyone understand the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son may choose to reveal Him. Come unto Me all ye who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest," etc. The metaphysical postulates lying behind these utterances may elude our grasp, but we must not therefore let slip the reality of this overflow of the consciousness of Jesus. He had identified Himself so intimately with the eternal Truth of God, that His own life had a royal and central meaning for the whole Kingdom of God. His hearers interpreted the words of Jesus as blasphemy, and took up stones to cast at Him; they were thrust upon the horns of this dilemma: either the Truth was in Him, or He was guilty of blackest profanity. The Sanhedrists looked upon Jesus as a blasphemous; the disciples accepted Him as the Master of their lives.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 27-30; Luke x. 22.

9. Among the incidents which exerted but slight influence upon the external development of Jesus' Ministry, and yet which throw considerable light upon His personal claims, we may give an eminent place to the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus. Its connection with the Feast of Tabernacles may appear slender or wholly arbitrary, but there is at least a topical interest and link in the self-disclosure of Jesus at the feast as the Water of Life and the Light of the World, and, in the secret night interview with the timid counsellor, as the Life-Giver. He taught Nicodemus that only such as are born from above can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The possibility of such second birth for man rests upon the operation of the Divine Spirit, which is perpetually breathing upon us like a holy wind. At His touch, if only man wills to respond, the mind bursts through its chrysalis sheath and becomes the percipient of a new heaven and a new earth. Jesus claims to speak with the authority of personal experience; His own vision was clarified and certified at His baptism, and the heavens were opened to His soul. But "if you have not believed earthly things relating to man's spirit-birth, how will you believe Heavenly truths which can be mediated only by one who has looked upon God face to face?" A parallel utterance is found in the apocryphal scriptures: "And hardly do we divine the things that are on earth, and the things that are close at hand we find with labour; but the things that are in heaven, whoever yet traced out?"<sup>1</sup> Jesus, however, presents Himself to Nicodemus as the Mediator of a new life with new senses of the Spirit: by being lifted up, He will bring quickening and knowledge to men just as the elevation of the brazen Serpent mediated life and health to Israel. The Evangelist treats this saying as an allusion to the Cross, a possible reference at the middle part of Jesus' Ministry; but Jesus may have thought of His own inward uplifting into the sure consciousness of things of the Spirit, and of the boon He bestows upon all who give Him preëminence in their lives. "Whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life."

10. This mysterious Egoism of Jesus is indissolubly associated with His teaching concerning a new philanthropy realizable in the Reign of God—an aspect of thought illustrated in the answer of Jesus to another learned inquirer about the eternal

<sup>1</sup>Wisdom ix. 16.



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life. In response to Jesus' interrogation concerning the law, the questioner summed up the teaching of the Old Covenant in two words—love to God and love to one's neighbour,<sup>1</sup> and then said, "Who is my neighbour?" The story of the Good Samaritan is Christ's answer, and in it He teaches that humanity counts more than orthodoxy; that the eternal life is love, and belongs equally to Samaritans and to Jews. Jesus overleapt all barriers of race, and inculcated a love as deep and catholic as the nature of mankind, thus restoring the true balance to the religious and ethical life. Jesus taught that religion consists not only in pious exercises, but also in an ennobling service of others. Humanitarianism, sometimes thought of as the discovery of modernism, formed a vital part of the religious ideal of Jesus; but the motive and impulse to the truest philanthropy will ever spring from attachment to the central Person of Christ Jesus. One of the perils of Christian thought is that of losing wholeness of vision through the need of emphasizing particular aspects. The renewed study of the Gospels restores the balance to faith; the mind beholds how in them the philosophy of the Logos is vitally bound up with the historic life of the Son of Man, and contemplates in Jesus Himself the perfect equipoise between the inner and outer life of man: He is "the root and offspring of David, and the bright, the morning star." The idealism of the Gospels is not abstract, vague and uncertain; for in Jesus the ideal is realized and embodied: the disciples did not pursue wandering marsh-fires, nor gave they their lives to propagate an airy dream born of speculative fancy; they were attached to the highest, concrete moral reality of history—the one Perfect Personality of our world. The Supreme Christ and Son of God of the Johannine record is linked with the Son of Man in the midst of lowly human surroundings portrayed by St. Luke; the Light of the World shines in the narrow sphere of Jewish society.

II. The claim of Jesus to this central position and power made at the Feast of Tabernacles appears incidentally in St. Luke's account of what occurred in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Since Jesus received none of the customary acts of courtesy and welcome at Simon's house, the suggestion arises that the invitation may have been part of the plan of Pharisaic espionage to which Jesus was subjected at that time. The tale

<sup>1</sup>Deut. vi. 3; Lev. xix. 18.



of the abandoned woman is full of exquisite tenderness, so that, as Gregory said, one is more inclined to weep over it than to preach about it. This passionate, erring woman must have heard Jesus speaking at some earlier time, and now she purposed to anoint Him with her precious unguent; but while standing behind Him, her heart was caught in a storm of conflicting emotions, and she could only bedew His travel-stained, unwashed feet with the rain of her tears, kissing them fervently, as again and again she sought to dry them with her loosened hair. Perceiving His host's censorious thoughts, Jesus related the parable of the Pardoned Debtors; then, by a sudden Socratic questioning, elicited from Simon his own self-condemnation. The depth of Jesus' emotion flowed forth in rhythmical speech as He contrasted Simon's discourtesy with the profound reverence and love shown by the woman. "Forgiven are her many sins, because she loved much; but he to whom little is forgiven, loveth little." Again there is implied the unique power of Jesus to absolve human sin; and the story reveals that it seemed natural to Himself to be made the object of an overwhelming love and gratitude. And yet the companion story of a scene in the home of Lazarus at Bethany shows that this transcendent, self-consciousness of Jesus was associated with extreme simplicity of personal habit; for, when Martha was cumbered with household duties and vexed with her sister's inaction, Jesus soothed her by saying that one dish would have been enough: where He was guest, hospitality need not be lavish if it be sincere.

12. There was something of climactic significance in the self-revelation of Jesus through His work and teaching at the Dedication Feast about the time of the winter solstice. The night approached when the Son of Man would cease to minister in human ways; Jesus already began to feel straitened for His baptism. As the disciples were entering the temple with Him, they saw a blind man and inquired whether this affliction was due to the fault of the parents or to some mysterious, prenatal sin. "Neither," said Jesus; "the man is destined to be an object of Divine mercy; God's work is to annul evil." He offered no theoretic solution of the problem of evil: faith in God's goodness made it clear that suffering itself is part of the Providential discipline of life. In defiance of all Jewish conventions on the Sabbath-day Jesus took clay and anointed the eyes of the blind

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man, sending him to wash in the waters of Siloam. This act occasioned a renewal of the old controversy, as Jesus doubtlessly intended; some witnesses argued that a man who violated the Sabbath could not be from God, while others reasoned that such signs as these could not spring from an evil heart. It appears as if Jesus proposed to strike a decisive blow at Jewish prejudices, knowing that the authorities had resolved to excommunicate all who confessed Him to be the Messiah. The healed man expostulated with the official leaders of Judaism, who angrily criticized both him and his Healer: it was strange, he said, that they did not know Jesus, since if He were an impious and disobedient man as they represented, God would not hear His prayer and use Him to open blind eyes. This shrewd logic only intensified the hostility to Jesus, and His opponents punished the man by formal excommunication. By thus sentencing the adherents of Jesus to religious ostracism, they declared their antagonism to the Reign of God initiated by their Foe. Finding this involuntary sufferer of His movement, the Master revealed to him that He was the Son of God in the world, and then He publicly announced that although rejected by the leaders He was indeed the Shepherd of God's flock. The official repudiation of His central claim only elicits a fresh revelation that He is the Door, and that through Him the souls of men shall be led into Divine pastures. The pastoral figure, consecrated in Israel by prophet and psalmist, is taken up by Jesus; He claims to be the Fair Shepherd, who lays down His life for His flock. Israel of the Spirit would know His voice and follow Him, although through Him the falsity of the leaders of the nation would be disclosed. In Christ's white Presence men divide into two classes—those who are for Him, and those who are against Him. Sternly He declares that the priests are but hirelings, who flee at the approach of danger, while the Pharisees who excommunicated the healed man were as wolves that tear God's flock. Then the vision of Jesus broadens out beyond the Jewish race, and He declares, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold: them also will I bring, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." While the three parables spoken at this feast describe the Reign of God in the terms of pastoral life, the central, and dominating figure in each is that of the Fair Shepherd. The official leaders of Judaism plainly perceived this fact, and threatened Him with stoning: as the builders of old re-

jected the corner-stone of the temple, the Pharisees and priests now repudiated the claims of Jesus.

13. The august claims of Jesus have been advanced here in no partisan spirit, nor in the interests of any special theory concerning His personality, but rather that we may hold in synthetic imagination all the phases of the life of that Catholic Man. Such sublime egoism as we perceive in the Gospels may still prove a stone of stumbling and rock of offence; but the fact itself that Jesus actually made these transcendent claims must neither be glossed over nor suppressed, in order that we may fit His stature to any scheme of Naturalism. It is simply true that Jesus—the lowly Man of Nazareth—made lofty pretensions to the love, reverence and loyalty of men and women such as Socrates, Gautama, Mohammed, and all the wisest of our teachers would instinctively shrink from making. Jesus surpassed them all in the magnitude of His self-consciousness. Some will attribute this egoism to the growing fanaticism of Jesus; and yet, what clear sanity shines out in His recorded sayings! When the woman said, “Blessed is the womb that bear Thee, and the breasts which Thou hast sucked,” He made answer, “Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus Himself was unaware of any incongruity between His own transcendent claims and His teaching of the supremacy of the Heavenly Father. He never speaks as a rival of the Father, but as the loyal Son. The reconciliation of these opposite poles of His teaching can be found only in the acceptance of His mediatorial office in our world. Jesus is the centre of human history, and He claims so much from man in order that He may lead the soul into the consciousness of the Divine Father. In the Name of Jesus, men are to meet together, and in that same Name make their appeals to God; and for His sake, the Father will answer. Jesus speaks ever as one who knows that God has given all things into His hands, and yet He lived ever as one who held nothing for Himself. His emphasis upon His own Person falls not upon the mere flesh and blood of His individuality, but upon the life-force which was in Him and which was a ganglion in the network of all spiritual relationships. The defects of all dogmatic treatises that deal with Christ’s Person are apparent to all; and yet it must be admitted that the mind of the Church

<sup>1</sup>Luke xi. 27.

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has seized upon the vital, essential note of the transcendence of Jesus. Probably the mystery of His Person will abide, a dark centre of light, until we have solved problems relating to our own personalities; but while owning the sense of mystery, we ought also to acknowledge all the facts belonging to the actual history of Jesus. He is bound up with us all, and touches the profoundest deeps of universal humanity; He seems to speak and act as one possessing the common soul of One mighty organism—man.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PERÆAN VISION

I. DURING the Feast of the Dedication, Jesus enunciated the cherished purpose of His mighty heart, and at the same time He gave an explicit announcement of the catholic and reconciling significance of His own Person: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must lead and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." From the middle period of the Ministry of Jesus, one detects a deepening of the tragic note; there comes into the record the stress of a feeling that Jesus was conscious of a moral compulsion carrying Him in a direction adverse to popular wishes. Jerusalem became His goal; however often He might be repelled from the capital, He was constrained to turn His face toward it again. The main tradition of the Synoptics distributed the Ministry of Jesus over Galilee and adjoining districts; and, were it not for a few hints<sup>1</sup> to the contrary, it might be inferred that Jesus spent all His time in the northern province, and then came to Jerusalem for the last week of His life. St. John, however—and this is no small part of the value of His Gospel—enables us to correct this misapprehension, showing us that Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Feasts of Obligation, and perhaps for minor festivals as well. It almost appears that even St. Luke was led astray by this Marcan scheme of distributing the evangelic materials, and finding a series of fresh traditions outside the common source recording parts of our Lord's Ministry at Jerusalem or on journeys hither, imagined that they must all belong to the last solemn progress towards the capital. Really the great interpolation is a composite mass of historic fragments, whose chronology is uncertain, marked by obscure connections and abrupt transitions, and yet by a *tour de force* welded into a seeming unity by the Synoptic notion that Jesus spent all His time in Galilee and the northern parts, going to Jerusalem only at the end of His Ministry. The emphasis upon the Galilean ministry in the Petrine tradition is explicable on the ground

<sup>1</sup> Mark v. 1-20; vii. 31.



that the controversies of the Jewish capital would have little interest for Christian communities outside Paestine. It must, however, have been a joy to St. Luke, imbued as he was with Pauline universalism, to discover a Peræan tradition of the wider evangelism initiated by Jesus Himself, although the Evangelist knew but vaguely that Peræa was a territory beyond Jordan. In pursuit of His great pastoral plan, we learn that Jesus first sent forth the Seventy with the evangel of the Kingdom; then followed these heralds in person. Although remote from the capital as were the places visited, Jesus never escaped from official espionage, but was followed by the sleepless vigilance of hostile Pharisees. At times He was forced into fierce polemic, and His voice grew hard and stern; but the deepening shadows bear witness to the light which was obstructed, and the severity of His rebukes throws into relief the revelation of a new grace and tenderness. It was the period when the graduated self-disclosure of His altruistic egoism drew near to its climax.

2. Kingly authority was implicit in the action of Jesus in sending forth the Twelve and the Seventy as ambassadors of the Reign of God, and in charging them to reproduce the miracles of His personal ministry. Such an extension of His appeal was no undesigned, unforeseen contingency, but was a part of His original project of evangelization covering both Peræa and Samaria. As He was borne along toward the high-water mark of popular responsiveness, the mind of Jesus was pervaded by a sense of the fateful moment in the struggle against Satan's power: a moral presentiment glowed within His consciousness clear as a beacon fire. As he passed from village and town along the route He had marked out, He was rejoined by small groups of returning evangelists, who exulted in that their mission exceeded all expectations. Even the demons had been subject unto them, and poor victims of madness and hysteria had been recovered through the power of Jesus' name. Such results, however, had not surpassed the faith cherished by the Master Himself, for in His own striking, imaginative phrase He had seen Satan hurled like lightning from His throne and falling<sup>1</sup> as a star from heaven. Jesus was not alluding to some

<sup>1</sup> *πεσόντα*: The action of the participle coincides in time with *εθεώρον* (Luke x. 18).

premundane fall of the Arch-angel through pride, but was affirming His exultant certitude of the ultimate conquest of the world by Righteousness and Love. In His view a more potent cause of joy than all the wonder-working was the fact of their personal acceptance with God, and that their names were registered in Heaven. St. Luke places, in this connection, the unique burst of ecstasy which St. Matthew has juxtaposed with the woes pronounced against the cities of Galilee: "In that very hour He exulted in the Holy Spirit, and said, I acknowledge to Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." To Jesus it was a provocation of purest happiness that God had chosen these "babes," unlearned and simple men, in preference to intellectual and aristocratic leaders; it signified the Divine rejection of caste and class distinctions. Throughout His Ministry, Jesus repudiated the arrogant and exclusive claims of the schools; reason was God's gift, not alone to priests and Pharisees, but also to peasants and fishermen. In such a sense as this we may characterize our Lord "as the great democrat";—in His eyes the person even of an unlearned and landless hind was sacred, and ought never to be treated as a *thing*, or as mere *means* to an end. While official and learned classes looked upon His followers as mere babes, ignorant and helpless in all important affairs, Jesus rejoiced that their mission had been sealed by God; that, through faith in Himself, they had been invested with mysterious gifts of the Spirit. The ideal socialism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau can only be realized in the Kingdom of God, which Jesus identified with the true Religion of Humanity; he sought "to find a form of society according to which each one uniting with the whole shall yet obey himself only and remain as free as before." Although Jesus thus asserted the independence of His movement of human intellectualism, it must not be imagined that He spurned the employment of reason: "He offers every word He speaks to the judgement of reason, and in every word assumes that reason is able to judge of truth presented to it."<sup>1</sup> Jesus was no obscurantist, though He rejoiced that the men who loved Him ingenuously were for the most part unsophisticated and childlike, for sincerity is more necessary even than learning in matters of moral judgement. The battle He had entered upon could never be won save by

<sup>1</sup> Professor Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, vol. i., p. 4.

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spiritual might; it was not simply a conflict with Pharisees and lawyers, but with the very spirit of evil enthroned in the world; and yet such was Jesus' faith, the victory was virtually won; Lucifer was already falling as lightning.

3. The complexities of the literary problem baffle all quests for certitude, and it is only tentatively that we can distribute the incidents and *logia* of this middle period. Increase of opposition but elicited a fuller assertion of Christ's authority. While attending the two last feasts, He had incurred such hostility that leading men had vehemently denounced Him as being a Samaritan, as being possessed with a devil, or as being mad; and this blasphemy is repeated as He heals a dumb demoniac.<sup>1</sup> To the charge that His feats of exorcism were inspired by Beelzebub, Jesus simply affirmed that His miracles were wrought by "the finger of God." As the conflict raged with growing intensity, Jesus urged men to take sides; cowardice and neutrality were rebuked by the Divine Power, so openly manifested in Him. Even the evidence of His healing works was rejected by the scribes and Pharisees; but when they demanded some other kind of sign from Heaven, Jesus declared that the Divine appointment of His Ministry was clear to all whose inward vision was undarkened by prejudice and impenitence. Their enmity to Jesus made them inhuman; instead of rejoicing in the man's new-found possession of speech and sanity of mind, they sought to throw a dark distrust over the whole work of Jesus, and to alienate from Him any who might feel the attraction of His beneficence. Their error passed from the region of intellect; it became a black perversion of their hearts. The very character of this duel between Jesus and professionalism made neutrality a crime; in such a struggle not to make a choice resulted in alliance with His enemies.

4. The invitation of Jesus to breakfast with a Pharisee on the Sabbath-day appears as an incident in the planned espionage to which He was now systematically subjected. Jesus, however, accepted it, and entering the house from the polluting contact of the outside crowd, He sat down to meat without washing His hands—a rite which tradition had made binding. The omission was not due to forgetfulness, but was a deliberate protest

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 19, 27; Matt. xii. 22-30; Luke xi. 14-17.

against a Pharisaic tendency to magnify trivialities at the expense of humaneness. The astonishment of His host was too apparent to pass without remark; but the severity of Jesus in commenting upon it seems almost like a breach of good manners. As though he realized this, the Evangelist tacitly reminds his readers that Jesus was no ordinary guest, but that He was "the Lord" (*ὁ Κύριος*). The Master perceived that the Reign of God in the hidden life was imperilled by the formalism and pedantry of the schools. His address, therefore, was not due to the rustic discourtesy of one ignorant of social etiquette; it was the defence of the essential rights and moral principles of humanity by its Lord. When Jesus, by association of ideas, went on to castigate the scribes, who not only added to the burdens of men, but also exhibited the homicidal temper of their fathers, who had slain the prophets, a lawyer remonstrated at the fiery philippic against his class (*καὶ ἡμᾶς ὑβρίζεις*). It was not that Jesus resented their hostility to Himself as an individual, but in His Person they opposed the Kingdom of God and all the humanities. Such denunciations reveal the vehemence and stress of the conflict; it had reached a stage at which it could no longer be concealed by suave speeches. The mind of Jesus was strong and tense with passionate purpose, and the opposition which could not be masked reminded Him of the fate of the prophets; He caught a glimpse of His own advancing doom, and it kindled in Him an heroic temper which shook itself free of all the proprieties of conventional life. His words fanned the flame of hate against Him, and henceforth the scribes and Pharisees lay wait for Him as men that sought to entrap a wild beast (*Σηρεῦσαι*).

5. Another incident illustrative of the struggle going on between Jesus and the authorities has been saved by St. Luke; <sup>1</sup> it occurred probably during the Peræan mission, while most of the disciples were still at work in Galilee. Although both in Judæa and Galilee Jesus was banned from attending the synagogues, He was able to join in the weekly worship in the remoter regions of Peræa. At one of these assemblies, Jesus one Sabbath-day observed a woman bent and bound as if a malignant demon held her enthralled; calling her to Him, He laid His hands upon her, and she was immediately recovered from the infirmity. The

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiii. 10-17.



ruler of the synagogue was one of those foolish men who, when clothed in a little brief authority, forget the instincts of humanity: he remained unaffected by the woman's exuberant gladness, and went so far as to rebuke the people for coming to be healed on the Sabbath. Such brutal lack of sensibility stirred Jesus to indignant reproof; even an ox is watered on the holy day: what fanaticism, then, to object to the restoring of one who had suffered eighteen years! Before this scathing exposure, His adversaries cowered in silenced hate; but the common people rejoiced "over all the glorious things that were being done by Him." Upon yet another Sabbath the scene was dramatically reiterated, with changes of the *personæ* in the various parts, the recipient of Christ's marvellous grace of healing being a man suffering from dropsy. In this latter case there appears to have gone on some intrigue and collusion to arrange a scene, so that damaging evidence might be heaped up against Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

6. The deepening gloom of this conflict afforded the Evangelist a background for the new evangel of Divine Pity and Forgiveness. If it were proved that the gracious parables of this section of St. Luke's gospel really belong to an earlier Galilean ministry, it would not detract from the historical value of this artistic representation of the Light of the World. Jesus not only anticipated the fall of Satan, in the vivid imagery of His Peræan vision, but He revealed also that the secret of the triumph of Right in our world is to be won by an evangel of redemption. The central mission of the Son of Man, as defined by Himself, was to seek and save the lost. This is the damning omission of non-Christian philosophy; the teachers of the world wrote and taught as though only refined and cultured minds could respond to exalted sentiments and lofty doctrines of ethics: but Jesus made a point of addressing His transcendental Gospel of love to men who were stigmatized as "the lost." It is not surprising that His enemies murmured the insinuation that His sympathy with outcasts sprang from a root of evil in His own character. But "with all their ingenuity of hate and malice, never once did they dare to prefer against Him any moral charge, and insinuations such as that 'this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them' fell harmless upon Him."<sup>2</sup> Familiarity with this phase of

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiv. 1-6.

<sup>2</sup> P. Carnegie Simpson, *The Fact of Christ*, p. 29.



Christ's teaching makes us dully acquiesce; but when we see how the missionary's appeal to "the lost" is an offence even today to non-Christian civilizations, we begin again to recover the sense of absolute originality in Jesus. The helots of society, the worthless, the degraded, have not only missed the true way of life, but they inflict a loss upon God Himself. The loser of the foolish, helpless sheep, of the piece of silver, and of the prodigal, in each instance represents God. But man viewed from God's standpoint is reclaimable, and however society may safeguard itself by stern conventions, the lost and the fallen may be recovered and reinstated in the Kingdom of God. These parables of Jesus are no futile pictures of vague sentimentalism; rather do they exhibit the set purpose of a Divine redemption; they articulate the evangelic order of Divine Sovereignty. All is Love and all is Law. The enunciation of this evangel in the speech of Jesus and its embodiment in immortal acts, discovered to man the might of God's Kingdom and of Satan's overthrow.

7. The progressive revelation of the real mission of Jesus was accompanied by the graduated announcement of His authority. He was conscious of being possessed by the Divine Spirit; and not only did He speak with absolute certitude, but He even identified Himself with the truth He taught. Such authority might easily be misconstrued and misrepresented; and it is credible that Herod, learning of the impression Jesus was creating, may have spoken some menace: whether he did so or not, some of the Pharisees pretended to warn Jesus that Herod designed to kill Him. But Jesus was not to be intimidated either by rumours of the crafty tetrarch, or by the overt hostility of those who watched for His fall; in a prophetic strain He announced His own intention of working in Peræa "today and tomorrow"—i.e. a short time longer: then He would return to Jerusalem to receive a prophet's doom. The Ministry of Jesus proceeded along predestined lines; He was no unwilling victim, led unseeing to the shambles; He foresaw the end, and could not be hurried into panic. Slowly He was prepared as an instrument passing through successive stages of refinement, "and the third day" said Jesus, "I am perfected." He had no fear of "that fox" (Herod); for He says, with blasting irony, John's death at Machærus was an exception—Jerusalem was murder's home. The Peræan vision of Lucifer's lightning-like fall was not incompatible with the

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fore-view of the final scenes of His Ministry. The self-consciousness of His authority was only one element in the preparation of His complete humanity; although He was aware of the dogging presence of spies and enemies, never once was He betrayed into an act which could be charged against Him as a moral fault.

8. The readiness of men to misconstrue His authority by making it something political or legal, opened up alluring visions to the throne of temporal power. Any lack of certitude on the part of Jesus as to the real character of His authority would have entrapped Him in stultifying errors; but the clear, un-deviating assertion of an authority purely spiritual on the part of Jesus comes out in His answer to a man who appealed to Him to arbitrate in some dispute with a brother over some property. "Man," said Jesus, "who made Me a judge, or divider over you?" The conflict between the Jews and Jesus was precipitated by His refusal to exercise the authority of a political Messiah; they despised Him as a mere dreamer of ideals. The authority of Jesus was understood by Himself to be the illumining power of His Truth, the force of right over wrong, the influence of Pity disclosed in Godlike humanity. He wielded the authority of the Physician over the sick, of the Good Shepherd over wandering sheep, of the Saviour over the sinner. Jesus took up the prophetic ideal of the Jews; purged it of the stains of racial hate, freed it from the narrowness of nationalism, and made it as wide as Humanity. And at every stage of the world's evangelization, His followers do well to avoid the misinterpretation of His authority: Christian missions cannot be supported by gunboats; nor should converts be protected by the missionary's assumption of temporal power. Jesus fought against the materialism of His age, and announced that what counts with God is not a formal or traditional piety, but the spring of true humanity in the heart. The conflict was severe; already Galilee had rejected Him; Jerusalem had excommunicated Him; and now, in Peræa, His enemies sought to urge Him into panic; but He foresaw that the struggle was predestined to end at Jerusalem, and that His own tragic fate would secure the realization of His vision of Satan falling from Heaven as lightning.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

I. WE shall venture to transpose the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, withdrawing it from its place among the closing scenes, and placing it in the middle period of Christ's Ministry. But, before stating our reasons for such a contravention of popular opinion, it appears needful to pass certain introductory remarks upon the character of the miracle and its possibility; since, if such a recall of a dead man to life actually occurred, it must be looked upon as the supreme instance of Christ's marvellous power. To recapitulate our previous "findings" in the study of miracles, which are frankly acknowledged to be the burden of faith today, we see that they fit in with the impression made by the Personality of Jesus; in fact, they contribute toward the forming of that impression of Jesus as man's Helper and Healer, and afford us parables of His Ministry in the realm of spirit. These miracles are answers to prayer,—the outflow and consequence of the uniting of the Soul of Jesus with the ultimate Divine Power which produces the world of Nature. The rationale of Christ's miracles lies, as Dr. Sanday says,<sup>1</sup> "within the bounds of personality, of character and of will;" and "miracle is not really a breach of the order of Nature; it is only an apparent breach of laws that we know in obedience to other and higher laws that we do not know." It is most presumptuous dogmatism to identify God's whole world-purpose with the laws or uniformities of Nature known to us, and then deny the transcendent and controlling activity of His will. Impelled by the desire to include everything in one symmetrical system of philosophy, Spinoza adopted the course of identifying God with Nature and denying all Divine transcendence, concluding that "a miracle, whether contrary to or above Nature, is a sheer absurdity." And yet so impressed was he with the stupendous grandeur of the account of the raising of Lazarus, that he said if he could be assured of its historical truth he would burn all his manuscripts. The philosopher's instinct was correct; this miracle is supremely offensive

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Christ in Recent Research.*

to rationalism. Jairus' daughter may be suspected to have fallen into a trance, the son of the widow of Nain might have been the victim of premature obsequies: but the representation of the death of Lazarus leaves no room for the conjecture that he may simply have swooned. With regard to the criticisms directed against the historicity of this tale, it cannot be treated as a variant report of the parable of Dives and Lazarus; while, of the critic who suggests that it is a free invention of the second century, we exclaim, "Ephraim is joined to idols. Let him alone!"

2. But if the raising of Lazarus be historical, how comes it that the earlier evangelists make never the slightest allusion to it? Our answer to this pertinent inquiry may be prefaced by repeating once more the oft-forgotten reflection that the silence of one ancient author must never be looked upon as a virtual refutation of the positive statement of another writer. Even when an omission yields the greatest surprise and is deemed inexplicable, it can never be treated as adequate disproof. In our sketch of the natural history of the Gospels we found reason for believing that the main stream of evangelic tradition found entrance into the early writings without material modification; we accept as probable the patristic belief that St. Mark owed his account to the report of the Apostle Peter. That Simon Peter should omit the story of this miracle, suggests that he was not among the witnesses of it; for had that impetuous leader of the Disciple Circle been with Jesus in Peræa, surely he would have forestalled Thomas' brave pessimism, and have been the one to say, "Let us go with Him, though we die!" Such absence is explained if the Peræan ministry was concurrent in part with the disciples' Galilean mission; although some of them had returned to accompany their Lord, Simon Peter may have been still engaged in the mission in the north. It cannot be said that St. Mark left this story out of the Gospel "because it did not fit in with his doctrinal scheme," for it is in completest harmony with the august and imperial figure of the Wonder-worker given by the earliest evangelist. Dr. Westcott has sought to lessen the adverse impression made by St. Mark's omission by suggesting that "for us the incident, as an external fact, has naturally a relative importance far greater than it had for the evangelists. For them, as for the Jews, it was one of many signs<sup>1</sup> and not

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 47.



essentially distinguished from them. The entry into Jerusalem was the decisive event in which the issue of all Christ's earlier works was summed up. This, therefore, the Synoptists record. For St. John, however, the raising of Lazarus was, as the other miracles, a spiritual revelation. It fell in then with his plan, so far as we can discern it, to relate it at length, while it did not fall in with the common plan of the Synoptic Gospels, which excluded all record of work at Jerusalem till the triumphal entry."<sup>1</sup>

3. One of the frankest and most fair-minded of critics has said that "the discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptic narrative—i.e. St. Mark's gospel—comes to a head in the story of the Raising of Lazarus."<sup>2</sup> After a cursory review of the problem of the Fourth Gospel, this writer concludes that the work is not history of matters of fact, but a Christian philosophy, cast in an historical form. Such a generalization as this, wherever it is accepted, makes all discussions of particular incidents utterly valueless; and yet such a phase of criticism is more difficult to meet than any definite attacks upon the historicity of the miracle at Bethany, for it expresses an attitude of mind, a mood and mental atmosphere, rather than an argument. Perhaps the best antidote for this poisonous scepticism may be found in the warning implied in a somewhat remarkable confession of a distinguished scholar<sup>3</sup> in *The Expositor* (April, 1908), who, coming to the study of St. John's gospel, as he tells us, after two years' exploration of Philo, the Talmud and The Apocrypha, began with the axiom that St. John was not to be regarded as an historical authority, and ended with the conviction that the axiom was "condemned as an improbable fiction." "The more I learn of pre-Christian and non-Christian Judaism, the more forcibly I was convinced that his gospel was, in letter and in spirit, a true picture of our Lord as He appeared to a disciple who was capable, *pro virili parte*, of understanding Him." A strong presumption for the historical value of this gospel arises as we proceed to compare it with the Synoptics; for by it the earlier traditions may be supplemented and corrected—so, at least, it appears to us; and, moreover, St. John seems to give us the antecedents of many of the Synoptic representations. After what we have said about the

<sup>1</sup> *In loco*.

<sup>2</sup> F. C. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and Its Transmission*, p. 221.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. A. Hart, M.A.



relationship of St. Paul to the evangelists in the "Introduction," it will bring no surprise that Professor Bacon finds a Pauline influence in the Fourth Gospel;<sup>1</sup> and yet it cannot be readily admitted that the Apostle of the Gentiles is the creative genius of this gospel, for its author was too original and profound to be dominated by any other than the Lord Christ. After all that advanced criticism has achieved, "the beloved disciple" of the Fourth Gospel may be as reasonably identified with the fisherman of Galilee, as with an idealized figure of St. Paul. Although Peter and John were described as "unlearned and ignorant,"<sup>2</sup> such adjectives mark a caste distinction rather than an intellectual state, and simply show that the two disciples were outside the magic circle of the academic and professional classes. That St. John was a fisherman in nowise determines that he must have been uneducated; St. Paul shows us that a tent-maker might be a scholar in Jewish life, and the practice of a trade did not in those times debar one from acquaintance with letters. But sometimes the Fourth Gospel is described as "philosophical" and "spiritual"; and if these adjectives are not employed to diminish the degree of historicity attached to the book, they are sometimes used to set forth the author's remoteness of thought from the rudimentary stages occupied by the Galilean fishermen as they are reflected in the Gospel narratives. It has to be remembered, however, that John was, in the School of Jesus, among the earliest of the disciples; that he received the Spirit of Christ, and that he was subjected to the stern, purifying discipline of exile in Patmos. For these reasons, therefore, we refuse to accept the *a priori* assumption that the Fourth Gospel cannot be a narrative of facts, but must be conceived of as an historical romance; and we claim that each incident must be studied independently and in all its relationships as the possible account of an eye-witness.

4. Coming, then, to the narrative of the Raising of Lazarus, we are face to face at once with the objection that the dialogue between the sisters and Jesus is thoroughly Johannine in its mystical tone, and that it is impossible to separate the facts from the philosophy. In a word, instead of supposing that this long dialogue was accurately remembered so long after its occurrence, it must be accepted as largely imaginative, although its invention

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1907.

<sup>2</sup> ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται (Acts iv. 13).

would be governed by the author's historical idea of Jesus. The admission must be made ungrudgingly that our evangelist does not write a colourless history, nor simply repeat, in the style of Herodotus, whatever was told him; but everything in the storehouse of his memory has been brooded over and steeped in the haze of his characteristic thought of Christ. Over against this, however, must be placed our recognition of the indelible impression which such a miracle must have made upon the mind of a witness, and of the fact that the leading ideas of the dialogue are congruous with the whole picture of the unique personality of Jesus. While we are fully aware of the unconscious modifications which affect things carried a long time in one's memory, and of the inevitable tendency of one's reminiscences to become blurred in their outlines as the years recede, still with equal psychological truth it may be said that there come to men experiences that strike down so deeply into their nature that they can never be radically changed in the memory, but the main features stand out imperishably in the perspective of the years. A certain corroboration of St. John's narrative arises from the fact that his vivid portraiture of the different characters of the family at Bethany corresponds with the representations of St. Luke. The individuality of Martha is depicted with innate truthfulness; she is the practical woman, with mind alert, even in the hour of bereavement, when Mary sits absorbed in brooding grief. Verisimilitude shines out in the remonstrance of the timid disciples at the thought of returning to Judæa, where Jesus had been recently threatened with stoning, as also from the despondence and noble loyalty of Thomas. Unconscious touches of nature are scattered undesignedly over the narrative; we seem to overhear the sisters' oft-repeated regret that Jesus had not come before: then, how convincing is the alarm of Martha at the suggestion of exposing the body of her brother after it had begun to decay! There is also a simple dignity in the restraint of the narrative, which is never once imperilled by over-emphasis or exaggeration; here are no conjectures about the deceased, no rhetoric about the sorrow, and no word about the welcome and rapture the resurrection evoked. The Evangelist has left it to the modern poet to ask, "Where wert thou, brother, those four days?" He has anticipated no answer. If we reject the historicity of this narrative, we must postulate the existence of some great unknown artist in the primitive Church, who could create

living characters in a book of fiction, write with balanced dignity and unaffected pathos, and never once slide into exaggeration nor indulge in fruitless fancies or speculations. Even the most advanced critic must feel it almost as difficult to conjure up this hypothetical literary artist as it would be to believe that John, the Beloved Disciple and quondam fisherman, wrote the book. We have remarked upon the congruity of the narrative with the impression of Jesus possessed by the Church; and to this should be joined the reflection that, if He actually owned the authority (*ἐξουσία*) He professed, then the raising of Lazarus is as adequate an expression of it as any miracle recorded in the Gospels.

5. No one fails to see that the author intends his readers to believe that the raising of Lazarus had a potent and determinative influence upon all the events that followed. It is the hinge upon which the final catastrophe turned, since it occasioned the calling of the Sanhedrim and the precipitation of the fatal word through Caiaphas which gave shape to subsequent intrigues and dramatic intensity to the pursuit of one object by the counsellors—viz., to kill Jesus and Lazarus with Him. We have observed that the Marcan tradition affords the ground-plan of the Synoptics, and a very little attention to chronology makes the reader acutely conscious of the difficulty of finding a place in this framework for the stupendous Miracle at Bethany. Most of the scholars who accept the historicity of St. John's story simply cut the Gordian knot, and assume that the miracle was transacted within the last four months of Christ's Ministry. And yet at what interval in St. Mark's narrative, from the Transfiguration to the Messianic entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, can any room be found for the raising of Lazarus? In the Fourth Gospel the successive steps in the drama appear to be so clearly articulated and to follow each other with tragic swiftness to the close, that readers have felt but little temptation to attempt a transposition of events. Professor Burkitt curtly concludes that there is no room for this miracle in the historical framework preserved by St. Mark. "Must not the answer be, that Mark is silent about the Raising of Lazarus because he did not know of it? And if he did not know of it, can we believe that, as a matter of fact, it ever occurred? For all its dramatic setting it is, I am persuaded, impossible to regard the story of the Raising of Lazarus as a narrative

of historical events.”<sup>1</sup> But if the problem is simply one of time and place, and the mind is free from *a priori* impressions about the impossibility of the miracle, we may at least consider the transposing of the incidents before accepting this desperate negation as the only escape from a perplexing dilemma.

6. As already stated, little reliance should be placed on the chronological terms of the Fourth Gospel; for it is dominated throughout by a theological plan. The writer's aim is to set forth the Incarnate Word as the Source of Life, the supporting Bread which comes down from Heaven, the Light of Life and the Revelation of Divine Love; and he has chosen the discourses and miracles in order to illustrate these various aspects of the Logos-Son. Some will judge that such an arbitrary placing of the incidents must detract much from the historicity of the narratives; and yet we do not refuse St. Matthew's account of the life of Jesus because he has been influenced perceptibly by topical affinities. We are justified, however, after recognizing St. John's ideal presentment of the Incarnate Christ, in treating the materials of this gospel as integrable in a synthesis, or tentative chronology, which shall include the special contributions of all the Gospels. In regard to the particular story of Lazarus, a fresh consideration of slight indications in the narrative itself makes it at least plausible that the subsequent events of Christ's Ministry covered more than a year instead of only four months. The emphatic and repeated mention of Caiaphas as the high-priest *that year* is supposed to imply that he offered Jesus as the Pass-over Lamb within the next four months; we regard the sinister accentuation, however, as falling simply upon the name of the high-priest who wielded such a malign influence at that time. From the Synoptics we learn that, after the middle of Christ's Ministry, great popular disappointment was felt and was followed by a determined secession. But the narrative of the Raising of Lazarus gives no evidence of Christ's waning influence; at that time His influence over the common people was so great and still increasing, that the Sanhedrim feared lest the whole nation should be caught in the contagion of enthusiasm. The criticism that there is no room for the Raising of Lazarus within the Synoptic framework if the story be placed in the narrative of the few last months, appears a just one, and it seems likewise

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel History*, p. 223.



true that to locate the incident at the termination of Christ's Ministry leaves no room for such an ebbing of popular feeling toward Jesus as the Synoptists report. The proper place of the miracle is found when we suppose it to occur immediately before the second and middle Passover of Christ's Ministry; and such a transposition is not merely the result of guesswork, but an inference deduced from the narrative itself. That the Passover immediately following the Raising of Lazarus was not the final one may be presumed from the absence of Jesus in the days of purification and possibly from the feast itself. We learn that the Jews sought for Him in vain and asked one of another, "What think ye, that He will not come to the feast?"<sup>1</sup> In order to escape the hostility of the Sanhedrim and the excitement of the people St. John tells us that Jesus "departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim." The attempts to identify this town have not been successful; but the mere detail of topography is of less moment than the certainty of the Master's absence from Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, or during the days when pilgrims went up to purify themselves. But the final Passover it could not have been; for at that Jesus was present, and on the previous Palm Sunday He had made His public entry into the city, and on succeeding days He carried on His Ministry in the precincts of the temple. No question could have been raised then as to His coming—neither in the aorist nor in the future tense; but such uncertainty as to whether Jesus would arrive or not, was quite natural at the time of the previous Passover,<sup>2</sup> for Jesus was then at some desert place, where He fed the multitudes. It is interesting to note that Professor Briggs makes the transposition of these two events, but retains the idea that both occurred in the last few months before the last Passover;<sup>3</sup> but it does not seem feasible or probable that two comparatively long journeys<sup>4</sup> should have been made, that the feeling of the people toward Jesus should be utterly changed, that many of the most important miracles should be crowded together, and all the momentous teaching from the sublime sayings at the tomb near Bethany to the *parousia* discourse of the Passion-week, should have been crowded into the last four

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 56, ἐλθῆναι not ἐλεύσεται; although the aorist might be used for the future.

<sup>2</sup> John vi. 4.

<sup>3</sup> C. A. Briggs, *New Light*, p. 153.

<sup>4</sup> Mark vii. 24-31; vii. 27.



months of Christ's Ministry. If we make the transposition of the two miracles—the Raising of Lazarus and the Feeding of the Multitudes—and interpolate the Johannine story into the historical framework of St. Mark, we must extend the time a whole year. By so doing we shall secure those intervals devoted by the Master to the special training of the Twelve, and find a certain balance and harmony in our reconstructed picture of His Ministry.

7. Our justification for such tentative changes in the chronological plan of St. John's gospel is that they make room for the Raising of Lazarus, and enable us to think of the story as historical and so integrate its contribution into our impression of Jesus. At least, we are able to review St. John's narrative of this miracle without latent or insurgent prejudice against its credibility; and this we shall now proceed to do. While Jesus was pursuing His Peræan Mission, a message reached Him from friends at Bethany: "Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." We know but little of Christ's private intercourse with friends; at most our materials are but fragmentary reminiscences of Him. Perhaps our most reverent imaginings concerning the inner history of the heart of Jesus might be profitably suppressed; and yet in the interests of His perfect humanity, the suggestion may be pardoned that toward Mary of Bethany He felt a peculiarly tender affection. It was, however, a part of His cross to forego all thought of domestic felicity; all private affections were voluntarily subordinated to the wider claims of His public love for the humanity in every individual. To the bearer of the sad message Jesus gave an answer that seems superficially discordant with the facts: "This sickness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Jesus felt that His work in Peræa was too important to be abruptly abandoned at the appeal of private friendship; He was guilty of no lack of tenderness, but He trusted Himself to the inner guidance of the Spirit of God, and after praying for His sick friend the inward prompting came to return to Bethany. In these days, when telepathy is a recognized part of psychic phenomena, there should be no incredulity concerning the statement that Jesus knew that Lazarus had "fallen asleep." In the deepest experiences of prayer, the soul realizes a perfect junction of the planes of consciousness described as higher and lower,

or spiritual and material; and, knowing this, we think it not at all improbable that Jesus received the conviction that the Father should enable Him to recall Lazarus from that realm into which death is one of the entrances. But when He proposed to go to Bethany, the disciples who were with Him were alarmed and sought to dissuade Him: "Rabbi, the Jews sought but recently to stone Thee! And art Thou going thither again?" Jesus once again reiterated His absolute trust in the Divine plan; and since His life was marked out as a day of twelve hours, He had no fear of stumbling, and no enemies could harm Him till His hour had come. The ambiguity of Jesus' metaphor of sleep for the fact of death having been defined, Thomas, perceiving the unwavering resolution of Jesus, stoically exclaimed, "Let us go too, that we may die with Him!"

8. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she came out to meet Him, while Mary sat unheeding in the house. The greeting offered by the dead man's sister was a lament that He who had power to heal the sick had not been at Bethany: "Lord, hadst Thou been here, my brother would not have died." According to St. John, Jesus answered and said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." All former hints and disclosures of His authority are thus summed up in the highest claim ever made by man; and after the passing of many centuries, and with all the light that can be thrown upon the words of Jesus, our understandings are too limited to sound the fulness of meaning implied in this utterance. Scepticism concerning its authenticity springs spontaneously in many minds; for it is sometimes hard to believe that the Man Jesus really made such claims. The best antidote for this contemporary rationalism that besets us as an atmosphere is found in reflection upon the fact of the influence of Jesus in all the succeeding ages. Had He actually anticipated His own posthumous and immortal achievements in the experiences of believers and in the history of Christendom, He could not have spoken a more accurate prophecy. Our instinctive repugnance to the supernatural ought not to be treated as a serious objection to a doctrine of transcendence; rather should it be held in check, that the mind may judge without prejudice. Should it come to be understood that this claim is the Johannine illation from the

operation of Christ's influence, still there can be little doubt that Jesus Himself originated impressions which made it possible to attach this stupendous egoism to Him. And supposing Jesus really were all that is claimed here, His self-affirmation of the truth might cut across all the prejudices of Naturalism, and yet it would have been inevitable that He should make Himself known. After all, I know not if the highest reason does not reveal itself in the most naïve faith. Jesus demonstrates that He is in touch with the whole human race; He penetrates into the subliminal abysses of personality; He raises and quickens the souls of men. Martha supposed that Jesus spoke of a remote resurrection belonging to the cycle of Jewish eschatological ideas prevalent at that time; but she advanced from Judaism to a form of Christian belief by acknowledging that Jesus was the Messiah through whom all their national and spiritual hopes were to come to pass. Dr. Hort states the case with his characteristic luminous suggestiveness: "On the one side were the jealous individual attachment which claimed the Lord only for herself and her brother, and the confidence in His power to prevail with God which assumed that His advocacy would be set in motion in like manner by individual friendship rather than by all-embracing allegiance to the Father's Will; on the other was the languid expectation, accepted passively from the prevailing creed that in some distant time her brother should rise again, and the inability to be satisfied with a promise too widely detached from the sorrowful present to affect deeply the sense of death within. Both sets of feelings were purified and enlarged together. The personal attachment was expanded into a faith which could recognize the individual heart's Lord as the Universal Lord: the torpid expectation was quickened into a living hope by becoming rooted in a personal faith."<sup>1</sup>

9. At the Master's bidding Mary was called, and, seeing her rise, the mourners followed, thinking that she was going to the grave to weep there. Falling at the feet of Jesus, the stricken woman repeated her sister's lament, "Lord, hadst Thou been here, my brother would not have died!" Her grief and the cries of the mourners smote the sensitive heart of Jesus with sore trouble. The Evangelist uses a phrase describing Jesus as indignant (*ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι*); but the enigmatic word implies

<sup>1</sup> Hort, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, p. 117.

that the Master was almost carried beyond Himself by emotion, and to maintain His self-control He was forced to repress His Spirit. Beholding Him weep, the bystanders marvelled at Him and debated how it was that He could open the eyes of the blind man, and yet not have been able to save a friend beloved as Lazarus. The divinity we attribute to Jesus at least implies that the character of God was mirrored in His life, although this should not diminish our feeling for His deep, true humanness. At the grave-side, Jesus made men know that the Divine Will permitting the experience of death is in sympathy with the heart of man. At His command to roll away the stone from the cave, Martha was filled with dread at the thought of exposing death's marred image; but, with insistent gentleness, Jesus waved her apprehensions aside, repeating that if she would only believe she should see the glory of God. "Father," He exclaimed, "I thank Thee that Thou art wont to hear My prayers. I know that Thou dost continually hearken unto Me when I call upon Thee; but now I address Thee thus because of the multitude present, that they seeing that Thou hast granted My desire, may believe and be persuaded that Thou hast sent Me." No histrionic posing is here; only a love so mighty that He would fain lift the witnesses to the high level of believing prayer. Then in a loud voice He called, "Lazarus, come forth!" The dead man heard and rising came forth, wrapt about with grave-clothes. Jesus bade them loose him of his cerements and let him go. Thus simply and without elaboration the story of this august miracle is recited. Lazarus brings no message from beyond the bourn, and the author omits all description of the scene as the resuscitated man steps back again into the old sweet life of Bethany.

10. This miracle was designed to reveal the glory of God and of the Son. Whatever we may think of St. John's coördination of these names, there stands behind it the fact of a mysterious ethical harmony between Jesus and God. We have felt the compulsion of history to acknowledge the colossal egoism of Jesus; but now, by the side of that phenomenon of His life, or at the back of it, we must place His own repeated confessions that all His power was derivative. The transcendent claims of Jesus to supreme authority among men can never be divorced from His recurrent testimony of its derivation from the Father. His miraculous energy was always ethically conditioned; the Power



He wielded was the Will of God flowing through the self-conscious volition of a perfect man. It is no solution of the problem of Christ's Personality to connect the ideas of harmony with the Heavenly Father and subordination in ethical purpose, but both these are factors to be acknowledged in every balanced statement of the problem. We suspect that the clues of many profound things are present in this story of the Raising of Lazarus. A light is flung upon the meaning of the fact of sickness and pain in the providential subjection of all experiences to one supreme aim—the glory of God; the specific exhibition of Divine glory in the sphere of history is the manifestation of the Son, in the realization of His purpose to communicate life, to make suffering subservient to a sympathy and power to uplift man. This miracle of resurrection was at once an answer to the prayer of Jesus and a concrete example of the work He proposed to accomplish among men. Jesus is the Mediator of a life which lifts man above an animal existence; and He completes the life He imparts by the quickening moral influence of His own immortal Personality.

II. As a Revelation of the Father and the Son, the Raising of Lazarus consummated a long train of events in the Ministry of Jesus, and swept many into active belief in Him as God's Anointed; other witnesses, however, went away and told the news to His enemies. A council was hastily summoned to consider what should be done with Jesus. The chief priests and Pharisees decided that he ought to be killed; but a few among them, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, protested, "What are we doing? For this man doeth many signs." The anger against Jesus could not be assuaged; the hostile authorities only replied, "If we let Him go on so, all will believe in Him!" Some councillors expressed the dread lest Jesus should excite the populace to an abortive rising, and so afford a pretext for Rome to strip the Sanhedrim of the last vestiges of its power. But with malignant cynicism Caiaphas, who was high-priest that year, pointed out that Jesus, if left alone for a time, would inevitably transgress against the supremacy of Rome, and that then He might become a sacrifice for the nation; rudely ironical, the Sadducean priest formulated his Machiavellian policy: "You know nothing at all. You do not calculate that it is for your advantage that one man should die for the people, instead of the whole nation perishing." Thus it may be said that the Raising of



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Lazarus lost Jesus His own life. We cannot but think that the policy of *laisser-faire*, advocated in this session of the Sanhedrim, first brought the Cross into view, and gives the true antecedent to Christ's repeated utterances about His coming fate; also, it seems a corroborative demand for a longer time than four months (sixteen months gives ample time) for the working out of such a scheme to its consummation. The high-priest who shaped this policy was a stern, clever, ambitious man; in his view, Jesus was but a pawn on the chess-board of contemporary history, and even Rome might be subordinated to Jewish ends. The Evangelist sees, however, that Caiaphas is held in the grip of a Power greater than that of earthly states: a spirit of prophecy speaks through him, and carries his words far beyond his conscious thought; Jesus was indeed to die, not only for the nation, but for all the children of God that are scattered abroad, that they might be gathered into one.

BOOK V  
THE REJECTED KING



## CHAPTER I

### THE FEEDING OF THE MULTITUDE

I. PRESUMING upon a tentative acceptance of the suggested transference of the Raising of Lazarus from the termination to the mid-point of His Ministry, we shall see that the course of Jesus in the subsequent months was in part determined by the unconcealed hostility of the Sanhedrim. Caiaphas had astutely inflamed this hatred of Jesus, and then had captivated the judgement of the leading councillors by his malignant policy of *laissez-faire*: they adopted a waiting attitude, pursuing Jesus with vigilant espionage, hoping that this unauthorized Rabbi would speedily commit Himself in word or deed, so that He might be accused of treason against Roman suzerainty. The peril of Jesus at this time lay not in Himself, but in the restless patriotism and political Messianism of many of His adherents and admirers; for, however careful the watch He set upon His own lips, who was able to control and restrain the rashness and wild schemes of these followers? The time had not yet come for His full self-manifestation; the minds of His disciples needed further education and the substitution of His spiritual ideas for their materialistic nationalism, hence it was necessary that He should find privacy and leisure for this work of preparation. Feeling that His mission itself was in danger lest His chosen followers should be precipitated into some reckless intrigue or revolt, Jesus left the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, going first "into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples."<sup>1</sup> Our knowledge of the topography of this itineration is as slender as it is uncertain, but mention may be made of Robinson's suggestion that the place designated may have been Ophrah, a town four miles northeast of Bethel, about fourteen miles from Jerusalem. This conjecture has the support of Josephus, who has written of a small fort at the north of Judæa, called Ephraim and connects it with Bethel.<sup>2</sup> The characteristic of the teaching of Jesus henceforth is that of increasing ex-

<sup>1</sup> John xi. 54-57.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish War*, iv. ix. 9.

plicitness and emphasis upon the Messianic yet spiritual nature of His vocation. Until this period He had refrained from all public avowals of His Messiahship, having sought from the beginning to transform the ideals cherished alike by His disciples and the people. His use of the title "Son of Man" and His own expressed consciousness of Divine Sonship had made it possible for Him to adopt the wavering belief that He Himself was to fulfil the prophetic oracles relating to the Messiah, without sanctioning the general misunderstanding of the Messiah's work.

2. Although the people attributed to Jesus the authority of a great rabbi, the leaders of national life treated Him as one excommunicated; and largely in consequence of this, as also the result in part of His longing for privacy, the Master was forced into a life of wandering. If it be not too bold we would transpose to this period His journey through Samaria and the memorable meeting and dialogue with "the woman at the well."<sup>1</sup> It was probably at noonday, not as some suppose at evening, when Jesus rested near the city of Sychar. If the great hours of life are those which register the uprising of noble thoughts, when the world becomes translucent, and waves of profound feeling roll over one's soul, then this must be adjudged one of the great hours in the Ministry of Jesus. While fact and interpretation are inextricably mingled in St. John's record, and many go so far as to doubt its historicity, yet not only does the dialogue run counter to every natural anticipation of what should have been likely, but there seems to be no adequate motive for the free invention of this story. The simplest theory is that it is true. There is no need to trace out all the windings of thought in Christ's converse; it is familiar to everyone. We note, as characteristic of the Master's behaviour, that He passes with swift ease from an ordinary request for a draught of water to utterances which stir the sleeping conscience of the woman. When she seeks to escape the embarrassment of reflections about her own life by allusion to the contemporary controversy between Samaritan and Jew, the Great Rabbi throws out the truths which have orbbed themselves with perfect lucidity in His own mind, and which, in the measure of their acceptance, destroy forever the old narrow prejudices of Judaistic orthodoxy. While He acknowledges His Jewish birth, He abnegates the bitter pride of race and claims to

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 1-42.



belong to the spiritual family of man; in a sense He Himself was the flower of the Hebrew Spirit, but such efflorescence was the birth of a new, broad humanity. Truly His words "seem to breathe the Spirit of other worlds than ours—of worlds whose course is equable and pure."

"Believe me, woman, the hour is coming  
When neither at Jerusalem, nor in this mountain,  
Shall you worship the Father.

But the hour is coming and now is  
When the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth:  
For such indeed the Father seeks to be His worshippers.  
God is Spirit:  
And they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

In this saying the true Spirit of all religions has crystallized into a perfect, pellucid and profound philosophy of spiritual worship; it is a *logion* which will live so long as man endures. By His direct connection of His claim to be the Messiah with this universal Religion of Humanity, Jesus purifies, elevates and universalizes the Jewish ideal, so that it affects alike the interests of every nation. Although His Personal Ministry was for the most part restricted to the Jews, His occasional contact with Samaritans forever forbids the ascription of Jewish exclusiveness to Him. By Jesus' concentration upon the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" He conserved all that was precious in a great historical, providential preparation; but the very intensity of His Humanity was the irresistible germ of world-wide catholicity. His enemies descried this motive force in His teachings, and accused Him ironically of being a Samaritan, and sardonically inquired, "Will He go unto the dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?"<sup>1</sup>

3. After sojourning two days among His Samaritan inquirers, Jesus travelled northwards into Galilee; and although the Passover—the second Passover of His Ministry—was drawing near, He dared not return to Jerusalem. His intention was not to resume His public preaching, but to rejoin His missionary disciples and take them away from exhausting toils to rest, recruit and receive further instruction.<sup>2</sup> It must be recalled that these apostles had been carrying out their mission to evangelize

<sup>1</sup> John vii. 35. R.V.

<sup>2</sup> Mark vi. 30, 31.

the two hundred cities and villages of Galilee all this time, making occasional excursions southward to their Rabbi, then returning again to their missionary itineration. St. Mark relates that the Twelve discharged their commission, and rejoined Jesus upon His coming back to Galilee; that the kind eyes of the Master perceived signs of weariness, and He therefore bade them "come apart privately in some desert place and rest." While the account given by the third evangelist agrees in placing this retreat immediately after the return of the Twelve, it suggests a different reason for the retirement to the neighbourhood of Bethsaida Julias. Reading between the lines of St. Luke's gospel, we infer that the Galilean evangelism, with its watchword of the Kingdom of God, had spread abroad the fame of Jesus and had excited the brave populace with hopes that He would become their political leader and deliverer. Controversies were aroused concerning Him; some said He was a prophet, either Elijah or John the Baptist returned to life; and a feature of greater peril in this movement was that Jesus involuntarily became the centre of plots and political intrigues which would be favoured by the zealots among his own disciples; hence "there were many people coming and going, and they had no time even to eat." Such developments not only justified the sagacious forecast of events made by Caiaphas, but they aroused dangerous inquiries in the palace: "Herod was seeking to see Jesus, saying, 'John have I beheaded; but who is this, of whom I hear such things?'" For these reasons also Jesus sought to escape publicity by going to the other side of the lake, embarking perhaps at the western shore and steering north-east; but His design was detected and the good-natured, excited people prevented Him from realizing it.

4. In discussing the Raising of Lazarus, it was said that no evidence was available to show that the popularity of Jesus had begun to wane; but the accounts of the "Feeding of the five thousand" afforded proof that the climax of popular enthusiasm was marked by this incident. The people had not yet caught the spirit of their rulers toward Jesus; their belief in His Messiahship had become a swollen torrent; the utterance of their proffered loyalty was as the sound of many waters; but Jesus refused to be what they wanted—a political demagogue: henceforward the waves of enthusiasm subsided, and except for one occasion of passing excitement, the feelings he had stirred moved sound-

less and slow as through a darkening wood. We have four accounts of the great meal in the desert, and this is proof of the deep impression made by the incident; but an honest attempt to find out what occurred and "diminish into clearness" the discrepant narratives brings us to a Marcan tradition and a later Johannine account. These two narratives are distinct and independent; there is no reason for doubting that St. Mark reports St. Peter's sermon based on the occurrence, combining with the report, inferences and modifications due to interpretation; St. John, on the other hand, was an eye-witness, and it may be that he wrote to correct certain misapprehensions of the familiar incident, although it remains equally credible that his gospel was "worked over" by some Christian scribe who, while imbued with the teaching of the Alexandrian school, cherished a high estimate of the Marcan tradition of Christ's Ministry. But that the Fourth Gospel gives no mere transcription of the Synoptist's narrative becomes apparent to the reader through the graphic and vivid portraiture of the whole scene, and also in the delicate touches belonging to the veracity of an eye-witness—rarely imitable by the artist. That the incident should be so distinctly recollected after the lapse of many crowded years was due to the crucial importance felt to belong to it: since it marked both the culmination and breakdown of the popular enthusiasm for Jesus, it could not be lightly forgotten. Modern observers of the complex movements of present-day Judaism may gain some insight into the excitement Jesus had aroused by His Message of the Reign of God from the controversies raging around the Zionist propaganda begun by the late Dr. Herzl.

5. Familiar acquaintance with the average churchman leads one to suppose that there are many naïve believers who cling to the dogma of the inerrancy of all the books included in this sacred Canon of Scripture. It is probably inevitable that such men shall view with alarm and suspicion the attempts to sift the Gospels and to distinguish between the original fact and later accretions and traditional modifications. But while we deprecate such misunderstanding, we must accept the task of our age to dig down to the real foundations of the truth. Should there be a temporary displacement of a stone here and there by an errant criticism, subsequent toilers will rectify such mistakes: meanwhile, it is well to remember that the Four Gospels are not

the foundation of the Church, but Christ Himself. In this work of investigation, a margin must be allowed for involuntary bias and the influence of the mind's preconceptions. Those who cherish a naturalistic philosophy will be predisposed to judge the narrative as unhistorical, although some even among these will be sufficiently impressed by the fourfold narrative as to admit that some actual occurrence must lie behind the Gospel legend. For ourselves, there is no reason for departing from our method of impressionist study, reading the narratives as we would other ancient literature, tracing amid the discrepancies the firm lines of an original, apostolic tradition so far as we are able, and keeping in view, as our guiding light, the total impression Jesus has made upon our minds. Still, it is incumbent upon us to analyze the four accounts, remembering that a comparison of the several gospels has shown us before, that the traditions concerning Jesus could not escape the modifications which proceed along with oral transmission; also the ineradicable tendency of the mind to over-emphasize and exaggerate the striking aspects of human experiences. Personally, we feel no antipathy to miracles; the august and unique character of Jesus makes credible the primitive belief that He performed acts remarkable for their power and beneficence. On the other hand, while giving full credence to this transcendence in the person and conduct of Jesus, it is impossible to shake off the heritage of a scientific era to practise economy in regard to miracle, and to believe that even in His works of exceptional power Jesus observed the rule of laws and forces which belong to higher Nature as yet undiscovered by us. In regard to the "Feeding of the five thousand," the ordinary Christian belief that Jesus achieved a stupendous miracle may be the correct view; it is the view created by an acceptance of the story as it is told in each of the gospels; and, for many devout readers, it is the only possible interpretation. So long as this belief remains sincere and unforced, no one would persuade others to discard it; but it should be recognized that, in the experience of not a few Christian thinkers, it has come to pass that only by a coercion of the reason could this conception of the miracle be retained. Throughout a long period of analysis and comparison of the narratives of this meal in the desert, many considered that there was no alternative other than to accept the miracle as it is related, or to reject the account as unhistorical. Slowly and surely, however, as they have traced the marks of modification



of original traditions in our Gospels, their judgement has been led to the verdict that in the original apostolic tradition, as it was preached by Peter and John, there was no affirmation that Jesus performed a miracle of creation. This abandonment of the natural impression, that a great miracle occurred, is not based upon *a priori* grounds of impossibility; for such is the writer's idea of Jesus that imagination is not staggered by the notion that, to meet a grave emergency, His power might be exercised to create baked loaves and cooked fishes; but renewed and repeated study of St. John's account of the feeding of the people has led me to think that this apostle, whose primary motive in writing was to convince men that Jesus was the Son of God, did not intend to convey the idea that Jesus performed a great miracle of creation. Were it not for the statement that the twelve baskets of broken pieces were "from the five barley loaves," St. John's account might be read without inferring the transaction of a miracle by Jesus. The suspicion of a redactor's touch in this phrase, who designed to assimilate St. John's account with the Church's current acceptation of a miracle, is confirmed when, as we read the discussion which follows, we observe the complete exclusion of any sign that bore resemblance to the Hebrew manna tradition that "He gave them bread out of heaven to eat." Further, the notice that the Passover was near prohibits the supposition that thousands of pilgrims would be journeying without ample provision of food: though the apostles might have come all unprovided for a sojourn in a desert place, the crowds would scarcely be so empty-handed as to necessitate a miracle.

6. The chief features of the Marcan narrative are as follow: In order to secure the privacy and rest needed by Jesus and His disciples at the termination of their mission they sailed across the lake to a rendezvous on the eastern side. This attempt to escape the crowds was frustrated, for the people followed them along the shore, so that a multitude met them as they disembarked. The Master's pity was excited, for they seemed as sheep having no shepherd; and He taught them many things; so long as He discoursed, the people showed no inclination to break away. The disciples, however, were more concerned for temporal things, and suggested to Jesus that the crowds should be sent away, that they might buy food in the neighbouring hamlets and villages. The Master, instead of dismissing the people, made the disciples



bring out their scanty provisions (five loaves and two small fishes), and, having blessed these, He gave them to the disciples to distribute to the great multitude who now sat in orderly companies on the grass. A miracle is clearly implied, and the result was that all were completely satisfied. In the Johannine account, the circumstances related by the Synoptists as leading up to this incident are omitted; the Evangelist introduces his story with characteristic abruptness and indifference to chronology. The multitudes are said to have followed Jesus because of the "signs" He did, even climbing the mountain where He sat with His disciples. It was the Passover time, and many of the Jews who were going up to Jerusalem interrupted their journey by listening awhile to the new Rabbi. According to St. John, it was Jesus Himself who first referred to the hunger of the people. To appreciate the story fully, it must be remembered that Jesus stood on a higher spiritual plane of thought than any of the disciples. They were thinking of a crown and of an army, and, as though Jesus would fain have them perceive the impossibility of realizing their materialistic dreams, He suggests ironically the greatness of the commissariat necessary to maintain an army, asking of Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?" Andrew, however, once the disciple of John the Baptist—recalling perhaps the miracle attributed to Elisha,<sup>1</sup> when with twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of corn in his sack, he fed a hundred men—mentions that a lad was there with five barley loaves and two fishes. Being ever prone to act symbolically as He was to speak in parables, "Jesus knew what He would do." All the day He had sought to nourish the crowd with His Spiritual Bread; and now He would bind them as with a sacrament, by giving them the few loaves with which His disciples were furnished: besides, it would be to the Twelve a lesson in magnanimity and faith, and would help them in future days to trust in the good-nature and justice of their listeners. There was no need of a miracle; for, as soon as the scanty store of Jesus had been distributed, so that all should eat of His bread, the multitudes would fall back upon their own Passover provisions, and would at least catch enough of the Master's charity as to share with those who might be unprovided for. St. John rightly terms this a "sign"; and though we invoke no appeal to miracle, it was a "sign" replete with beauty and ethical meaning. When the late Professor Godet

<sup>1</sup> II Kings iv. 42-44.

asks "how so simple a fact should have produced in the multitude such a state of exaltation that that very night they sought to get possession of Jesus to proclaim Him King," he fails to appreciate the previous growth of popular enthusiasm which was now ready to seek to express itself at any moment.

7. It is not difficult to conceive how an incident of such a character, and marking by its happening a climax and crisis in Christ's Ministry among the people, should have been subtly transfigured by the alchemy of primitive *Aberglaube* into a stupendous miracle. The men who believed in the Resurrection of Jesus had come to see in Jesus a Person charged with Divine power and glory; and they were prone to translate the remarkable, natural phenomena of His Ministry into miraculous displays of His veiled divinity. Another tendency operative in the early Church upon the original evangelic deposit of eye-witnesses was that of reading into the Ministry of Jesus the fulfilment of the oracles of the Old Testament—not only of viewing Him as the realization of all previous types, but also of seeking, in the subsequent tradition of His work, parallels to all the chief events of the Old Covenant. Just as the deliverance of the Sermon on the Mount corresponds to the giving of the Law at the institution of the Jewish nation, so many would treat a story of the feeding of the multitudes as the counterpart of the maintenance of Israel with manna in the wilderness. Such a method of treating a narrative of miracle cannot be confined to this one incident; it will be applied to many others, and in the process the facts of Christ's Ministry are in danger of being dissolved into a mist of uncertainty. While we admit the perilous possibility and lament that we are not living in happier ages of naïve belief, we dare not refuse to take up the task laid upon us by the Ruler of History; we have to face historical problems, to dig down through all dogmatic accretions, until we touch the true foundation which is Christ the Lord. If we be accused of "rationalizing" a Gospel miracle, our justification must be found in St. John, whose record of the subsequent challenge flung down by the Jews<sup>1</sup> leaves no room for any miracle of creating bread. This being so we dare not conceal our "finding." The search for truth must always be perilous; yet since truth itself is more precious than rubies, we cannot be deterred by apprehensions of mistake: an arduous quest may be more profitable than any easy attainment.

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 30f.

8. The real point and value of this incident in the progress of Jesus lie, however, not in the question whether He performed a miracle, but in the momentous issues which hung upon His treatment of the enthusiasm He aroused in the five thousand men. The record of St. John supplements the Marcan narrative, and in spite of all discrepancies they produce together the verisimilitude of reliable history. In contrast with the usual impression, the details and characters of the incident are drawn with sharper outline in the Fourth Gospel than in the Synoptics. As a rule, St. John represents the "signs" of Jesus to have failed in carrying conviction to the people, while St. Mark shows how by His works Jesus stirred a great popular enthusiasm; but, in the sequel of the feeding of the five thousand, the fourth evangelist is much more explicit and illuminating. In the Marcan story, the conduct of Jesus is clearly set forth, but the motive of it is unrecorded: writing long after, St. John supplies us with an explanation. The earlier evangelist states that when all were satisfied, "immediately He compelled the disciples to embark and cross over before Him to the opposite side to Bethsaida, until He dismissed the crowd; and, after taking leave of them, He went up into the mountain to pray." But this abrupt, imperious behaviour is fully accounted for, as we read in St. John, of the dangerous excitement of the multitude, who were exclaiming that "this is really the prophet who is to come into the world," and were goading one another on to seize Jesus and force Him to be their King. The Galileans were an alert, proud, patriotic people, and zealous haters of Rome; they were destined, in the final struggle for independence, to sacrifice a hundred and fifty thousand youths, who died willingly in fighting for liberty. Jesus read the spirit of these men, and refused to lend Himself to the forwarding of their political designs; when He saw the disciples inclining to support the scheme of crowning Him, He sharply commanded them to embark and withdraw to some other place. Since our main interest is to trace the historic development of the earthly Ministry of the Rabbi of Nazareth, so that we may understand how He came to be believed in as a Divine Person, we must allow no controversy about the miraculous meal in the desert to divert attention from the momentous crisis that marked this mid-point of His public work. So great was the political agitation in which Jesus was momentarily entangled, that, had He not acted with instant decision, the leaders of the movement

in collusion with the disciples would have forcibly seized (*ἀρπάζειν*) His Person and have compelled Him to head their march to Jerusalem. Sternly resolute, Jesus ordered the Twelve away, and turning His back upon the incipient revolutionists He went up into the mountain to pray. He refused to be either the demagogue or the tool of political intrigue and rebellion;—not that He had a doubt about His fitness to be King, but because He held His higher Kingship as something infinitely above the popular conception. The people longed for the advent of David's Son; they wanted a national hero, cherishing a patriotic ideal of freedom from foreign domination. The swell of ancient prophecies reverberated in their imaginations, and they forgot the ideal of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. Jesus Himself designed the foundation of a Spiritual Kingdom; the people, although missing the meaning of His highest message, were attracted by His manifest power. They interpreted His claims upon the allegiance of His followers by their own political preconceptions; and, while puzzled by His frequent thwarting of their expectations, they were for the time convinced that He was "the Coming One" spoken of in Scripture. At times they wondered at His vacillation, for they desired Him to strike a blow for national liberty; His spiritual teaching mystified them; but one of the results of the Mission of the Twelve may have been to spread a belief that a change was imminent; the very watchword of the missionaries concerning the Kingdom was felt to be the signal of the beginning of insurrection. Among many of the disciples who staked everything upon this attempt to force the hand of Jesus may have been Judas Iscariot, and his fanatical disappointment at the impracticability of the Master may have led to the moral deterioration which ended in treachery. But, having withdrawn from the excited crowds, Jesus spent the night in lonely vigil and spiritual communion, feeling as He meditated there on the mountain, that the time had come to disillusion the people of their false Messianism once and forever, even though the issue might be the renunciation of Himself as one who seemed a futile dreamer.



## CHAPTER II

### THE MYSTICISM OF JESUS AND THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF THE PEOPLE

I. THE political designs of the multitude were swiftly balked by Jesus in the dismissal of the Twelve, and His own retirement to the solitude of the Mountain. The gross distortion of His mission, not only by the excited crowds, but even by His own intimate disciples, must have produced a double accentuation of that feeling of isolation which Jesus experienced so often in the very midst of the swarming crowds. He was a lonely, uncomprehended Man, removed far from the superstitions and idols of an unspiritual people by His abiding insights into the heart of Nature, of Man and of God. His escapes into solitude were probably the only occasions when He was able to rid His soul of the sting and smart of loneliness. Saddened, indeed, must Jesus have been, as He reflected that night upon the nearness of the danger that Caiaphas had predicted—that His movement would assume a political character, and entangle Him in the fine meshes of Roman law. We shall miss something of His greatness, unless we take account of the forces of that wild and fanatical maelstrom of Jewish patriotism which, had He wavered for a single moment, would have swallowed up His little society in a tumult of revolution and bloodshed. It is difficult for us to conceive of the fitness of Jesus to assume the leadership of military adventure; but, to contemporary Jews, it apparently seemed a feasible project. Cromwell and Gordon demonstrate that men of a deeply religious nature may be successful soldiers; that the mystical temper may be allied to habits of intense practicalness. A fair recognition of all the facts of the Ministry of Jesus prevents any attempt at cataloguing Him among dreamers or enthusiasts, at labelling Him as of sanguine or melancholy temperament. Attention to one set of facts may leave the impression that Jesus was a meditative, poetic religious genius; but then arises another set of phenomena into view which compels us to acknowledge His vigorous, far-seeing and sagacious mind; besides that,



St. Mark represents Him as a spiritual athlete, putting forth all His strength to accomplish a definitely planned mission for establishing God's Reign on earth. The completeness of His humanity tends to conceal, from the unprepared mind, the greatness of Jesus as Man; the consequence of this has been a fragmentary vision of Him, so that in successive ages different aspects of His life have been emphasized almost to the exclusion of other phases equally real. Hence, every mind fashions its own Christ, but no one has yet seen Him as He is: still, our idea of Jesus is our greatest knowledge; it is just so much of the Mind of the Master dwelling in our minds. Nevertheless, having corrected the impatience of our partial vision, we may venture to give special attention to the mysticism of this Rabbi; for Jesus was the spiritual kinsman of those seers of all ages and climes who have felt the touch of the Spirit as the most momentous fact of their experiences. Such souls have ever been like flowers exhaling a delicate and beautiful perfume and imparting a distinct "feel" to the atmosphere around. In the varied life of our great Master, we trace recurrent alternations of activity and quiescence—of energetic ministry and of quiet prayer, which were as the diastole and systole of the heart's action; for even Jesus would have been unable to maintain His beneficent expenditure of life-force, had He not received periodic replenishment of Spiritual life.

2. "It was already dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them." In these words the Evangelist implies that the disciples awaited Him at a certain rendezvous; but, finding that He did not arrive, they resumed their interrupted journey across the lake. The rowers, however, made but little progress, their efforts all being frustrated by a storm of wind, which swept down upon the water. The relative positions of the struggling disciples and their Lord, keeping vigil on the Mount, are symbolic of the Church in every age. Suddenly the baffled disciples were affrighted, thinking they saw a ghost. The phrase (*ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης*)<sup>1</sup> leads naturally to the suggestion that Jesus appeared "by the sea"; for this preposition is used with the genitive sometimes to express vicinity, hence "at the sea" might be equivalent to saying "on the shore." The disciples, not realizing their nearness to land, and not expecting Jesus to overtake them now, fancied, as they saw His

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 19.

form dimly moving in the uncertain light, that it was an apparition *on* the water, and were superstitiously alarmed. A very slight modification of the oral tradition of this story would give a miraculous turn to the narrative; but, however the incident may be interpreted, it leaves unmodified the Church's faith in Christ. One who believes in the historical reality of His sinless life finds no difficulty in believing also that Jesus might transcend the ordinary law of gravitation, if it were necessary for the realization of some high purpose, but if it seem unnecessary to invoke a miracle the mind seeks for a natural explanation. Perceiving the alarm of His disciples, Jesus called out to them not to be afraid. St. Matthew relates that Peter at once recovered from his superstitious fears, and besought Jesus to permit him to walk on the sea to meet Him. While this is manifestly congruous with the known character of that disciple, there are many who regard the incident as a mythical adjunct illustrating the fluctuating moods of a typical man among the first followers of Jesus. Readers will decide the point according to their several judgments; but, whether looked upon as literally true or as symbolical, the treatment of this incident does not affect one's conception of Jesus. A psychological touch is given by the fourth evangelist, who says, "Then they were ready to take Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land for which they were making." St. Mark, who treats the entire scene as supernatural, relates that at that instant the wind dropped, "and they were sore amazed in themselves; for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened." This last statement affords an incidental guarantee of this Evangelist's good faith; although the apostles had come to be regarded as the pillars of the Church by the time he was writing this gospel, still he never attempted the least concealment or extenuation of their natural faults and failings in the period of their probation. It is easily credible that a reminiscence of Simon's own confession of mental obtuseness and spiritual hardness lurks in this Marcan recital of the story.

3. The next dynamic moment in the sequel to the feeding of the multitude was the discourse in the synagogue, on the mystic Bread, related alone by St. John. Were we to judge the value of the Fourth Gospel by this contribution alone, aiding us as it does to understand the new turn of events in the Ministry of

Jesus, we should ascribe to it the highest historical insight into the psychology of the facts related by the Synoptists,—that henceforth the popularity of Jesus perceptibly waned. On the morning following the strange feast on the hill, the people were astonished that Jesus could not be seen, since, on the previous evening, they had seen the disciples embark in the only boat off the north-eastern shore, and leave their Rabbi behind. During the night, however, the furious storm had driven in some boats from Tiberias, and many of the people took advantage of these to cross back to the other side. Coming to Capernaum, they were surprised to learn that Jesus had arrived before them and was in the synagogue. At once they went to Him with the many-voiced inquiry, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" For the understanding of what followed it must be recognized that the mood of Jesus had changed since the previous day. He had seen His whole mission imperilled by the persistent misconception of His Messianic rôle, and had come to the determination to make it impossible that anyone should henceforth imagine that He cherished any design of securing temporal power. During His midnight vigil, great clearness had come to Him as to the irreconcilable antagonism between the popular Messianism and His own spiritual ideal, and He perceived that He could not transform the thoughts of His age beyond His immediate circle of disciples. The clarified vision revealed to Him the arrival of the crucial hour of His Ministry, and unhesitatingly He resolved to strip away from men's minds all illusions about Himself. In any other life, we should characterize the taking of such decision as the preëminent expression of moral courage. About Jesus, however, we hesitate to use such language, lest we should even remotely seem guilty of the absurdity of patronizing by our eulogies One who rises so much above our ordinary standards of conduct. Hitherto the populace had responded to the spell of His dominating personality; but the people could not appreciate the highest phases of His work, and all too evidently they had misinterpreted the mission of the disciples. Now the moment had come for a clear, bold, unmistakable definition of His purely spiritual aim in the world. The great prophetic ideal of Messianic kingship was now to be freed from the swaddling-bands of national pride and prejudice, and Jesus was to show that the true King belongs to the whole race, and that He must nourish the world by the sacrifice of Himself. His auditors were of various parties; some were

Galilean zealots, ready to follow the lead of anyone who would set up the standard of the Davidic dynasty; some were hostile Jews, carrying out their scheme of espionage, and insinuating their contempt by scornful epithets flung at "this fellow"; some were wavering adherents who had been impressed by the work of Jesus and did not know what to think; and a few were His own most intimate disciples.

4. Once again the peculiar difficulty in using the Johannine writings for historical ends confronts us: the sayings of Jesus are mingled with the reflections of the Evangelist; while in the Synoptics the *logia* shine with a clear-cut light, here the profound thoughts of Jesus are fused and sometimes blurred in the shimmering radiance of John's theosophy. Still, with a little attention we discern the real sayings of Jesus like points of starry light in the Milky Way. The recorded dialogue in this sixth chapter may be steeped in the hues of the writer's characteristic style; and yet it not only retains the traces of historic verisimilitude, but it also gives us clues which make the first Galilean apostasy historically explicable. In the Capernaum synagogue that day, Jesus deliberately employed such metaphors as could not fail to be misunderstood and lead to irritation; He provoked a controversy that was bound to issue in grumbling and strife, and even in renunciation of Himself as an impracticable dreamer. He takes the feeding of the multitude, and treats it as a parable in action, setting forth symbolically the real spiritual relation that He sustains to the world. We touch here a characteristic mode of thought used by Jesus; to Him the visible realm and relationships are revelations of the invisible realities. Behind the *Maya* of phenomena there is a trustworthy Reality of eternal goodness; and the material aspects of life are as shadows flung by the soul. Jesus claimed to bring a Divine provision for mankind's spiritual hunger. The legend of the manna, which played so important a part in the national store of metaphor should have supplied His hearers with a key to His mysticism. The metaphors of eating and drinking the truth were familiar to Jewish readers: hence one wonders at their total inability to understand Jesus. Wisdom invites her children, "Come, eat ye my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled."<sup>1</sup> "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall

<sup>1</sup> Prov. ix. 5.



yet be thirsty.”<sup>1</sup> “Thou gavest Thy people angels’ food to eat and bread ready for their use didst Thou provide from Heaven without their toil. . . . For Thy nature manifested Thy sweetness toward Thy children.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus applied these figures to Himself, calling Himself the Bread of Life—man’s food from Heaven. Passing from metaphor to symbol, Jesus at last set forth His flesh and blood as the soul’s meat, betraying darkly, for the first time in public, His divination of the necessity of giving His personal life to satisfy the world’s need. Such symbolism cannot be interpreted with prosaic literalness; it must speak many meanings to the minds of men; coördination with similar sayings may help the understanding; for example, Ezekiel was told to eat the roll of prophecy, and one of the psalmists wrote, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey unto my mouth.” One of the Rabbinic sayings concerning the Messianic hope was, “In the coming age they neither eat nor drink, but the just sit with crowns on their heads and are nourished with the brightness of Divine Majesty.” Yet another was, “Such as was the first Saviour, so will be the last; as the first Saviour caused manna to fall for Israel, so the last Saviour will also cause manna to descend for them once more, for it is written, ‘There shall be abundance of corn in the land.’”

5. Jesus Himself laid down the first principle of sound hermeneutics: “It is the Spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the sayings which I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” He deprecated that unimaginative literalism which fails to pass behind the metaphors to the spiritual realities of His teaching. Men do not live by bread alone; they hunger for truth, justice and love. Our life is not nourished by material acquisitions; it feeds on the more subtle aliments of hope, faith, beauty, thought and righteousness. The living Bread from Heaven must comprise all these separate aliments; and if Jesus be that Bread, then are these given in Him. Often His disciples have regarded His teaching as being the Bread He gave, but a profounder insight apprehends that the greatest gift of Jesus to our world has been His own Personal Life. His sayings were indeed as fountains of living water, and yet words be they never so noble,

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 19-21.

<sup>2</sup> Wisdom xvi. 20. Cf. St. Paul’s πνευματικὸν βρῶμα: πνευματικὸν πόμα.



and even deeds though they be sublime, are but symbols of the soul from which they emanate. We all crave after the ultimate Reality, and this cannot be less than personal: our own souls are fed by the love, the thoughts, the very ego disclosed in reciprocated relationships. The Truth for which the intellect craves is no abstraction, no creed however logical, but the actuality of the Divine Life: we long for God—for the living God. The Righteousness after which the heart hungers is no empty "categorical imperative," but the harmony of Divine and human wills. The flesh and blood which Jesus offered were the symbols of His Ego or Life; these can be assimilated by meditation, obedience and responsive love: the metaphors of eating and drinking must be translated into the spiritual functions of thought and will. Jesus addressed His thoughts to the future as much as to His actual audience; through the language of profound mysticism He spoke to all generations, but His immediate aim was to show forth the essentially spiritual character of His mission, and so make impossible the recrudescence of all false dreams about His Messiahship. Once again we trace the astounding egoism of this meek and lowly Man; He calls Himself the Son of Man, and He is most truly human; in His veins is the red, warm tide of creature-life: yet all the while the title is perceptibly laden with the aroma of prophecy; it is pregnant with Messianic implications. He claims to speak as the "sealed of God"; and He is sealed not by a water baptism only, but also by a Heavenly chrism,—sealed by the demonstration of Divine approval and endowment of power. Four times He reiterates His unique affirmation to have come down from Heaven, thus mystically articulating His abiding original possession of the consciousness of God. His life, He says, with all its various expressions of thought and action, with its subsequent sacrifice and anticipated resurrection, is the living Bread given to nourish the inner spiritual consciousness of mankind. Jesus asserts, in this discourse, that He is the Mediator of eternal life; also the true Object of contemplation and faith, and the Divinely given sustenance of the soul. To eat this Bread from Heaven is no physical act of participation in the Communion-Sacrament; it is to believe on Jesus, to experience the drawing of His Spirit, to assimilate His habit of thought and temper; and only those who thus believe, and are inwardly taught of God, may be spoken of as feeding on the Bread of God. And of them it is said, they are secured against the dissolving power

of death, for they are heirs of the thrice-repeated promise of the resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

6. In some measure every sincere teacher gives not only thoughts, but also his soul to his pupils, and preëminently in the case of Jesus every word He uttered contained the communication of His Life. His words were essentially the overflow of His sincere thought, and however fragmentary our records of His speech, His sayings breathe the totality of His Spirit; whatever criticism the Gospels may yet undergo the *logia* of Jesus are as genuine coins struck from His inmost experience, stamped with the image and superscription of His unique consciousness. While in other realms of teaching the demand upon the personality of the teacher will be with proportionate diminution as the methods and matter are more formal and mechanical, it is an inviolable law of the Spirit that he who would teach and help others in things pertaining to the soul must give himself as a sacrificial meal for others. Jesus complied with this law so completely that the world has fed upon Him ever since; His own veritable sayings and their echoes in other minds, His personal example and sacrifice have been found to be the real Bread from Heaven, and sources of perennial inspiration to the nobler spirit of man. We have been nourished by that great mind and heart of His in all high thinking and generous enthusiasms; and through the Ideal mediated by Him, mankind has been saved from dismal abysses of materialism and from the despotism of chaos and night.

But if the words of Jesus had been doctrines of ethics and metaphysics, they might have passed without demur by His listeners, who would not have stumbled at His theories had they not first been offended by His personal claims. His audience passed speedily from a mood of surprise and of inquiry to one of murmuring and hostility. As men listened, they supposed that Jesus Himself claimed to come from Heaven, and, deeming that the facts about His birth were simply human and unmarked by aught unusual, they judged it impossible that He could have descended into this human state from a place of Heavenly transcendence.

7. It is beyond dispute that, in His teaching of the mystic Bread, are implications of a personality which cannot be exhausted

<sup>1</sup>Wendt and Reuss treat this idea of resurrection as secondary and due to the redactor.

by the titles of rabbi, sage or prophet. There is no escape from the tremendous dilemma thrust upon us by the claims implicit in this Johannine record, whether they were made by Himself or invented by others: "Assuming that the stupendous claim ascribed to Him is false, one would think it must have disordered His life with insanity if He made it Himself, and the accounts of His life if others invented it."<sup>1</sup> Behind the claim to be the Bread of Life which cometh down from Heaven, lies the whole mystery of Christ's consciousness, and no final explanation of that consciousness has yet been given. The words of Jesus would have passed as fleeting breath and found no resonant echoes after His death, had there not been a life of such a character that through it men became sure of God. The words of Jesus breathed forth the supreme ideal of Humanity, but it was the Life which Jesus lived which made His *logia* immortal; and that Life was the manifestation of such a Personality as God Himself dare not, cannot, obliterate. Whatever processes of idealization and intellectual transformation have gone on in the transmission of the Jesus-ideal through the centuries, He makes men conscious still of the Father-Spirit of the universe. When, however, we go back to the apostolic records and seek to find their interpretation of the Consciousness of Jesus, the centuries seem to slip away; for, whatever changes have taken place in our philosophic modes of thought and terminology, the idea of Jesus is for the most part identical with the experience of men today. Jesus made the apostles sure of God; He gave to them the idea and understanding of the Father's Presence. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory—glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." To really eat the Bread of Life from Heaven does not equate itself with an intellectual acceptance of the apostolic formula of the Incarnation; it means, rather, that we should pass through a like spiritual experience, and receive into our own inmost life the consciousness of Jesus. Such was the influence of Jesus and the consequence of His Ministry in the lives of the apostles, that they were driven as by inspiration to conceive of Him as One who had lived in a state of Preëxistent glory, but, out of love for humanity, had laid aside His beatific divinity and become one of us by being born as a little child. To some minds this apostolic theory comes as an adequate and as an authoritative interpre-

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, vol. i., p. 120.

tation; but there are others to whom it is a burden of mystery; they admit that it may be true, but they have no assurance. Now, supposing it is true is it of supreme importance that we shall acknowledge this Incarnation-formula? Does Jesus really mind? No, the matter of preëminent moment in the mind of Jesus was that men should participate in His own consciousness of God and of Humanity, that they should eat of the Bread which cometh down from Heaven. Whatever weight may be given to the intellectualization of Christianity by St. Paul, that apostle was nourished on that mystic Bread, and was able to say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." To eat of that Bread—to feed on that consciousness of Jesus, implies at least that we shall know God by intuition as "our Father," that we shall love men as Jesus did, that we shall think His ideals, cherish His aims, will to do His will. While participating in this experience it may be that many honest minds will oscillate in perplexity and indecision concerning the relative and external views of Jesus Christ; but they will know the real and inner life of Jesus and be His intimate disciples. Thus once again was verified the statement made by Jesus that He sought to make His earthly Ministry an imitation of what His Heavenly Father did; as in the tradition God gave manna, and in fact ever gives the true Bread from Heaven, so the Son gives Himself—that is, His consciousness and very life, to men as the Bread of the Spirit. The revealing Reason, the Logos, or life-imparting Spirit, is for ever coming down from above, stealing in upon us like the light, and flooding our souls with nobler impulses. The mystery of the life of Jesus we have not fathomed, but we perceive that He summed up the Divine Ideal of manhood, and drew the sea of life in which our personalities are merged into His own experience as the Son of Man; and through Him we are fed by a larger eternal life which goes far out beyond our finite individualization,—by a great Social Spirit which integrates all the units into one vast organism of redeemed humanity.

8. Believing that this discourse embodies not only the reflections of the Evangelist, but also the actual memories he retained of the thoughts of Jesus, it will not surprise one to find in it a veiled allusion to His future sacrifice. If Caiaphas had already defined the policy of the Sanhedrim towards Jesus as we suppose, then it is natural that fore-glimpses of the final tragedy should



begin to appear in the speech of Jesus. "The Bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." Since Jesus subsequently gave His body to be crucified, it is inevitable that these words should be interpreted as Christ's anticipation of the Cross by which His glory, grace and truth were to be diffused throughout the world. In the light of that final tragedy this record reads like a passion-discourse, and it becomes connected with the supper He shared with His disciples at the end. Consciously, or unconsciously, Jesus adopted the old Semitic idea of eating the sacrifice and sharing the life of the tribal god, the Bread sent down from Heaven in Himself could only be given to the whole world by His voluntary sacrifice. He gave them this Bread by giving Himself. Those who would enter the Reign of God had to forego all thoughts of a holy war against the Roman oppressor, the obligation was laid upon them to assimilate the mind of Jesus,—to absorb His ideas, learn His affections, feel His enthusiasm for humanity,—to appropriate Him, as it were to eat His flesh, so that His human ideal may live in them again.

9. Strange as it may seem, this mystic discourse, tintured already with the blood-red hues of His anticipated Passion, was the means deliberately adopted by Jesus to disillusion the people of their false notions of His Messiahship and to sift out the grain from the chaff in His movement. Many of His auditors had pursued Him from the east side of the lake, bent upon forcing Him to be their King. Such men listened in utter bewilderment; the rarefied atmosphere of the Spirit He breathed exhausted them and left them nerveless and inactive: even the disciples of the inner and outer circle were pained and stricken with despondency as Jesus cast a blight upon all their earth-born hopes and ambitions; while the spies and enemies who belonged to the ruling classes felt their hatred intensified, and knew not whether to rejoice or lament that Jesus had dashed to the ground the popular enthusiasm He had kindled. Under the influence of His lofty idealism the prevalent Messianism with its concrete notions of a national restoration was dissipated as a wreath of smoke. Jesus had forced upon His disciples the dilemma of choosing between two exclusive ideals,—the low one of national ambition which He could never stoop to realize, or the spiritual one of Jehovah's Suffering Servant. The people had asked



for a strong hand and a sharp sword; but Jesus seemed to them to be offering only the words of an idle dream. At last the turning point was reached in the movement which had gathered around Jesus; now the common people who had hitherto believed in Him went over to the side of the authorized religious leaders of the nation: Jesus had become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. "Many drew back and walked no longer with Him." The bitter disappointment infected the spirits of the Twelve and it seems not improbable that at this crisis disloyalty first touched the zealous Messianist named Judas. Seeing the cloud on the face of Iscariot, Jesus felt the poignant pathos of a lonely and discredited Leader; for a while it seemed as if His most intimate disciples might be caught in the popular revulsion of feeling; seeing them divided He said to the Twelve, "You will not leave me too?" To their abiding honour they showed that love and loyalty can live through the storm of personal disappointment and popular ill-will. Although they could not foresee all that might be involved in their decision to stand by Jesus, they could not fail to feel the sting of scorn as their enemies threw their jibes at the Master. This, together with their own sense of keenest disappointment, imparted a touch of heroism to their choice. The greater number of the Twelve voluntarily chose obloquy with Jesus as more greatly to be preferred than all the world's honour without their Lord. It is only too evident from the record of later incidents that these disciples had not entered into the grandeur of Christ's ideals, to them His teaching was vague and for the present inapprehensible; yet in answer to the question Jesus had asked, Simon Peter said, "Lord, to whom can we go? Thou hast words of eternal life. And for our part we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God." Whether St. John anticipates in this answer the confession made by Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, and has foreshortened the time of suspense between this Capernaum crisis and the epoch which stands out in the Synoptics, cannot be lightly determined. It may be that the fourth evangelist takes the liberty of inserting, at this crucial point in his narrative, a confession of Peter during the flight which followed as a consequence upon the Galilean apostasy. But while the causal *nexus* between the two incidents might justify a slight foreshortening of perspective in the narrative, it is still within the range of credibility that Simon might repeat His confession a second time, that Jesus Himself might deliberately

elicit a repetition of this avowal of faith for the benefit of all the Twelve. This, however, is a question of secondary moment, the great outstanding and determinative fact is that in this first hour of trial, when the popular attitude swung round from one of favour to one of antagonism, the Twelve maintained their outward loyalty to Jesus although they could not as yet understand Him.

## CHAPTER III

### DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN

I. As the fourth evangelist summarises in the concluding verses of his sixth chapter a process of vacillation, suspense and division, which probably extended over a period of several weeks, we may use the Synoptics to supply the actual incidents and details which lay behind St. John's general statement. By thus making our respective narratives supplement each other's deficiencies there will be acquired a clear conception of the emergence of a stubborn unbelief, malignant questionings and resolute hostility to Jesus, which issued at length in the national rejection of Him as a mere Pretender. The crisis described in our last chapter took place at Capernaum, His adopted city. Early in His Ministry Jesus had chosen this town as the chief centre of His Galilean evangelism, and it is evident that its populace had at first been favourably impressed by Him; but as we have seen, when Jesus deliberately refused the political leadership which the people desired to thrust upon Him, and made it unmistakable that the Messiahship He claimed was an unqualified Spiritualism, the disappointed people abandoned Him as an ineffectual Dreamer. Notwithstanding this revolution of popular opinion about Him, instead of withdrawing at once and altogether from Galilee, Jesus seized the following days, while men were pausing before taking the next step of avowed animosity, for an extended tour through many of the places where the Twelve had publicly announced that He would come. Jesus knew that ere long other towns would follow the example of Capernaum, but meanwhile a last opportunity was afforded for a further appeal to those who were still oscillating between belief and unbelief. With swift decisiveness, and before any prevenient notice of obstruction could be carried to the towns and villages around, Jesus renewed His itineration. According to St. Mark, this tour was made forever memorable by His miracles; the

people brought out all their sick to Jesus, and even they who could but touch the fringe of His cloak were healed.<sup>1</sup>

2. It was probably at this time that Jesus made His last visit to Nazareth (*ἡ πατρίς αὐτοῦ*), although by St. Mark the account is placed before the Mission of the Twelve, while St. Luke's beautiful narrative of what occurred forms a kind of frontispiece of the Ministry of Jesus. Those who accept the Lucan placing of this incident as chronological will find, in this compulsory departure from Nazareth, a partial explanation why Jesus afterwards made Capernaum His chief centre. But, in our conception of the trend of events in the life of Jesus, the visit to Nazareth fits in most naturally with the itineration that followed the Capernaum schism. While the oracle read by Him announces an ideal programme of the Messiah's mission, the rejection of Him by the irritated Nazarenes is typical of what now happened throughout Galilee and Judæa. The longing to revisit the scenes of His youth and the home of His childhood swept over His soul when He was repudiated at Capernaum, just as the longing for a draught of the water of the well of Bethlehem overwhelmed the heart of David in the hour of adversity. Such a sentiment is characteristic of the naturalness of Jesus, and is easily understood. While the third evangelist places the incident at the threshold of the ministry, yet by his mention of the mighty works done in Capernaum, which had aroused the jealousy of the people at Nazareth, he makes it well-nigh impossible to accept this very early occurrence of the rejection of Jesus; but then, on the other hand, why did Jesus leave His own village so long unvisited? We can only infer that, from the attitude of His own family, who had soon regarded Him as the victim of frenzy, Jesus had rightly gauged the native hostility of neighbours and home-friends to any recognition of His spiritual authority. But He could not go away from Galilee without once visiting the place "where He had been brought up";<sup>2</sup> therefore, He came to it now with mingling hopes and fears. It is evident that excommunication from the synagogues in Jerusalem did not prevent His joining in public worship in the provinces, although it had long ago been made impracticable to continue His synagogue ministry in any systematic manner: hence, He came, as was His

<sup>1</sup> Mark vi. 53-56.

<sup>2</sup> Mark vi. 1-6; Matt. xiii. 53-58; Luke iv. 16-30.

wont, to the meeting-house at Nazareth. There was manifest excitement because of His presence; for, while it was known that He had assumed the status of a rabbi, and by His teaching and remarkable powers of healing had won universal fame, it was also equally well known that He had become a companion of "sinners," and had again and again violated the laws of the Sabbath. Besides, not long before, members of His disciple-band had probably delivered in this village their Lord's message of the Kingdom: so curiosity to see Him would blend with irritation at His renown, and many in the synagogue would recall memories of their acquaintance with Him when He was with them as a carpenter, while they would cherish disapproval of what, in their conservatism, they would deem His arrogance and domination.

3. The *chazzan* handed to Jesus the roll of the prophet Isaiah, and all listened as He read from the Hebrew text and then translated into Aramaic; it would be noticed, too, how He broke off the reading at a clause reverberant with the joy of jubilee, and omitted the line which spoke of the "day of vengeance."

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Therefore He has anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor,  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of  
sight to the blind,  
(To set the oppressed at liberty),  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

Having rolled up the scripture and handed it back again, Jesus began to give His interpretation of the prophecy, and a strained hush of expectancy fell upon all the listeners as they watched Him with eager intentness (*ἦσαν ἀτενίζοντες*). "This day," said Jesus, "is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears!" His voice was calm, grave and singularly winsome, and must have set the chords of many hearts vibrating with involuntary response. Here at Nazareth, in the home of His childhood, and the scene of His years of toil, He made the claim to fulfil all the essential meaning of the Messianic oracle He had read; and here, as well as in Capernaum, this self-disclosure becomes the touchstone of character. The first impressions in His favour made by His persuasive and gracious utterance gave place to vulgar prejudices against the Carpenter; He was too well known

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lxi. 1-2.



to them, and His brothers and sisters were humble folks, still living in the village: perhaps they were in the synagogue, and it seemed preposterous that Jesus should possess such authority. They were scornful at His daring application of a sublime prophecy to Himself, and were alienated from Him by stupid feelings of jealousy and anger. One thing only would satisfy them; they had heard of His miracles: let Him, therefore, convince them by some startling display of power. And how could He do them any good morally, when the very leaders of the national religion had rejected His claims? And so they thought, Physician, heal thyself! But a mere intellectual assent resulting from sensational displays would be morally worthless, and Jesus offered no sign. He may have said, as Weiss thinks He did, at this time: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."<sup>1</sup> St. Mark states that "He could not work any miracle there beyond laying His hands upon a few sick people and healing them." The graphic account by St. Luke, of the attempt to kill Jesus, may be the result of a confusion of the Nazareth tradition with a story of the violence which had been exhibited in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> "There must be here," says Weiss, "an intermixture of Johanne reminiscences in the tradition of Luke." Jesus Himself marvelled at the strong expressions of unbelief which were shown at Nazareth. He felt Himself more and more isolated, and He recalled that in ancient times Elijah and Elisha had achieved their greatest triumphs outside Israel. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." The passion of His life was to identify Himself with the people; but so intensely selfish, so driven by gross materialism and religious bigotry were they, that they could give no place to a mind which moved ever on a plane of equable purity and universal benevolence. He was compelled to tread the path of life alone and to become a spiritual exile.

4. It was becoming more and more difficult to continue the ministry in Galilee; for the waning of popular affection for Jesus gave opportunity to the malignant espionage of sleepless and vindictive enemies from Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> The occasion of complaint came through the disciples—these quondam fishermen and peasants, who, feeling little the importance of the artificial ceremonies

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 44-46.

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xv. 1-20.

of Pharisaism, openly disregarded the washing of their hands with the fist (*πυγμῆ*) before meals. This trivial ceremony was the mark of a religious caste, and as such was accounted by the Pharisees as a graver matter than the exercise of ordinary kindness. Their remonstrance, however, elicited from Jesus a scathing indictment of contemporary Pharisaism for preferring the traditions of men to the commandments of God. The religion of Jesus, personally realized and authoritatively taught by Him, was inspired by filial consciousness toward God, and issued in virtue and benevolence in all human relationships. Jesus saw the danger lest inquisitive research and erudite orthodoxy should take the place of the eternal principles of religious morality, and laid down the axiom that, if the principle of kindness collided with some rule of religious ritual, the latter must be swept aside as the brain-spun cobwebs of religious convention. Jesus disdained a whispered controversy with His foes; boldly He appealed to the reason and conscience of the common people, saying, "Nothing can make a man unclean by entering him from outside: nay, what makes a man unclean is that which issues from him." Impurity is a defilement of the soul, not a matter simply of physical pollution: meats and unwashed hands matter little when considering moral values, and with a sweep of His hand Jesus cast Pharisaic formalism into the limbo of worn-out superstitions. His speech was like a sharp sword cleaving asunder the futilities of artificial thought and laying bare the realities of life, and the enemies of Jesus seemed paralyzed for the time as by some lightning-stroke. At a later stage of the argument, Jesus said, "Every plant which My Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Leave them: they are blind guides. And if a blind man lead a blind man, both of them shall fall into a ditch." The stern deliberateness of this castigation of the Pharisees showed that Jesus Himself deemed a point had been reached which made the reconciliation of this sect impossible. Knowing that He had failed to win Israel, Jesus felt a great wave of sorrow and breathed out a lamentation—not a curse, but a cry of spiritual disappointment—

"Woe to thee, Chorazin! Woe to thee, Bethsaida!

For had the powerful deeds performed in you been performed in  
Tyre and Sidon,

They had repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Yet I tell you, Tyre and Sidon shall find it more tolerable on the day  
of judgement than you.

And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted as far as heaven? thou shalt be thrust down to hades!

For had the powerful deeds performed in thee been performed in Sodom,

It would have lasted until this day.

Yet I tell you, the land of Sodom shall find it more tolerable on the day of judgement than thou!"

5. "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Greatness must often be misunderstood, yet frequently one of the hidden notes of greatness is the very longing for sympathy which intensifies the pain of being rejected. The agony through which Jesus passed at this period has never yet been totally conceived by any man; it may well be that the hour of His final tragedy was more easily borne than the season of suspense. Although aware that the hour had not yet come for His complete sacrifice, He perceived that it would be impossible to continue His work in Israel; one plan alone was practicable—to devote Himself henceforth to the training of the Twelve. "Now He rose and went away" beyond Galilee northward into Gentile regions. His subsequent wanderings may have extended over many weeks, or even months; for He visited the mercantile cities on the Syrophœnician coast, crossed the Damascus road (we have no disproof of His having entered the ancient city He had come so near); next passing the Lebanon range, he returned southward through Decapolis on the eastern side of the Lake. A question neither unimportant nor uninteresting arises, Whether Jesus made one or two prolonged journeys northward? St. Mark gives account of two; but this is suspected of being a literary reduplication occasioned by the misunderstanding of a confused and variant tradition of the incident of feeding the multitudes. This theory is credible, since it cannot be denied that the Evangelist might err; and yet it is by no means impossible that Jesus should a second time succour a hungry crowd of listeners. We admit to the feeling of a prejudice against a recurrence of this incident; and the facility with which a reduplicated tradition might grow up is apprehensible by all who observe the modifications that take place in oral transmissions. Against this instinctive prejudice we must place the circumstantial differences in the two accounts: the time was different; the place also was not identical, since once they were within easy reach of places where provisions could be purchased, but the second time they were remote from all towns. In the

first narrative the people are said to have been with Jesus one day; in the later incident they are represented as having accompanied with Him three days; lastly, it is not beneath notice that each narrative has its own word for the basket used (*κόφινος: σπυρίς*), a difference which might arise from the different shapes of basket made in different localities. We also recollect that, in one of the gentle reproaches Jesus uttered when His disciples misunderstood Him, He recalled to their memories both incidents of feeding. Taking all these trifling details together, they certainly have weight for judgement, and incline us to believe that St. Mark has preserved a literal and true account of the order of events at this time;<sup>1</sup> and, if so, the repeated incident of feeding a multitude breaks the wanderings of Jesus, so that we think of two separate journeys into Gentile lands. Two such flights give an air of reality to the accusation made by Celsus:<sup>2</sup> "In company with your disciples, you go and hide yourself in different places"; for it is not likely that outsiders would divine the real motives of Jesus.

6. The juxtaposition of contrasting incidents in our Gospels, though often undesigned, sometimes lends an added pathos to the record of Christ's Ministry; at this juncture, for example, the affecting appeal of the Syrophœnician woman follows the story of the Galilean rejection of Jesus. Like some exile from His native land, Jesus sought privacy and rest in heathen territory: as though He were suffering from the depressing reaction of recent exciting experiences, "He went into a house *and wished no one to know He was there.*"<sup>3</sup> His fame, however, had spread abroad, even among the Gentiles of the north, so that His presence could not be kept private; and very soon a woman in need found Him out, and besought Him to heal her little daughter, who was possessed by a demon. Jesus at first ignored the petitioner, and then, when her importunity forced Him to speak, His answer seemed like a cruel repulse, which no verbal ingenuity can explain; and yet, when we conceive the dilemma into which Jesus was thrown, His words lose their obscurity. Sometimes it is forgotten that Jesus found a part of the problem of human life to consist in learning what the Divine Will really is; we ought to bear in mind the fact that even Jesus gained no exemption

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 10; Matt. xv. 32-39. <sup>2</sup> *Origen against Celsus*, bk. i., ch. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Mark vii. 24.



from the task of choosing between alternative possibilities. At this period of His Ministry it is feasible that the Jewish rejection of His claims might have stirred the doubt if it might not be best to appeal directly to the Gentiles. Even as He was wrestling with this perplexity the Syrophœnician woman may have stood before Him as the representative of the Greeks, and, like the Macedonian of St. Paul's vision at Troas, uttered the cry of heathendom, "Come over and help us." The reiterated plaint of this poor woman vexed the disciples, and they urged their Rabbi to send her away. Jesus told her the thought which had been working in His mind that His Ministry was to Israel. Upon hearing this she fell at His feet with entreaties; but seeing this, Jesus quoted a Jewish proverb, as though He were pursuing a mental argument quite as much as holding dialogue with the woman, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto the dogs." Repellent as the saying seems to us, the Master's *tone* evidently left the woman's trust in His goodness unquenched, and with ready wit she replied, "Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." It is not surprising that the woman's faith should triumph over Jesus' seeming reluctance, and as a consequence He sent her away with a promise that her petition should be granted.

7. Although Jesus received the spiritual monition that His Father gave permission and power to heal both the Syrophœnician girl and the deaf-mute in Decapolis, He did not account this a Divine commission to pursue an extended ministry among the Gentiles. As the first sense of perplexity which sprang from the pain and disappointment at the Galilean rejection passed away, He perceived that this period of wandering was an opportunity long desired of giving special attention and instruction to the Twelve. At the same time a tour with Jesus through heathen districts could not but serve as a survey of missionary ground, and the Master sought to prepare His disciples for the recognition that the Reign of God was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. Providentially confined to the House of Israel though His personal ministry was, His parables and general teaching show that Jesus anticipated a world-wide extension of His movement. The disciples may have dully acquiesced in the thought that the Gentiles should some day come as converts to Zion; but already Jesus had planted in their minds the germs of His



spiritual and universal faith. There may have been not a few contingencies in the subsequent history of Christianity which were wholly unforeseen by Jesus; but there can be little doubt that He deliberately planned the establishment of a Kingdom as broad as Humanity; and though He saw that His own life must be terminated with all the tragic accompaniments of crucifixion, His faith in the Father, in the Divine origin of His movement, made Him certain that the work He had begun could not end. He was no utopian dreamer, deluding Himself with false hopes; He clearly anticipated His own death, and foretold times of persecution for His followers; still, He was sure of the harvest, and definitely set Himself to the task of preparing the minds and spirits of the disciples for the coming spiritual revolution. Some things He uttered were probably not understood at the time, but He knew that they would sleep in the memories of His hearers and awake with power in days to come.

8. Presuming that St. Mark's version is correct, we must imagine Jesus to have followed a circuitous route and got back again to some place east of the Lake. Here the people flocked to hear Him once more, and after preaching to them for three days, Jesus met the emergency of hunger by repeating the gracious incident of the feeding of the multitudes. After this He entered into the boat and came to the unidentified region of Dalmanutha, or Magadan. Having returned to Israel once more, He became the subject of temptation; for, hearing of His arrival, Pharisees and Sadducees came to put Him to the test. Pfeleiderer has looked upon this as the germ of the temptation story. It was an ill omen that sects, mutually embittered against each other, should sink all jealousies and ally themselves against Jesus. They wanted a sign from the sky—some portent that would quench all their doubts; probably they were ignorant that such doubts as they had were due to moral rather than to intellectual causes. Jesus sighed heavily in spirit at this renewed symptom of their antagonism, and refused all other signs than that which Jonah gave to ancient Nineveh—the prediction of judgement and call to repentance.<sup>1</sup> He was deeply wounded by this fresh display of invincible hostility, and abruptly departed from the place,

<sup>1</sup>“Matt. xii. 40, is a gloss which formed no part of the original saying, but was introduced very naturally, though erroneously, by the author of our present Gospel.”—SANDAY, Bampton Lectures, 1893, p. 433.

hurrying His disciples into the boat to go to Bethsaida—whether the town of that name on the west, or one on the northeast of the Lake is uncertain. The incident is surrounded by obscurity, although it may be inferred from what followed that the plausible address of the Pharisees and Sadducees, with their political and external ideas of Messianism, had made but too much impression upon the susceptible disciples. The Master's sudden change of plan so disturbed them that they forgot to purchase bread. St. Mark, ever alert in garnering even trifling reminiscences of Jesus and the disciples, records the fact that they had only a single loaf with them. It was not of this, however, that Jesus spoke when He warned them, "See and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod!"<sup>1</sup> He was preoccupied with the graver implications of the recent discussion, and was anxious to tear out of their hearts the last remains of the Jewish dream of a political restoration. They could not understand, however, that He was oblivious of material needs for the time, and with childish literalness said, "It is because we have no bread!" Their spiritual dulness vexed Him for a moment, for what did their scarcity of provision matter, when twice within recent months they had seen the multitudes fed at His instigation and example; and Jesus asked, "Do you not yet understand?" The question lays bare the quivering nerve of Jesus; He was stung by the sense of spiritual isolation. Yet we dare not blame His disciples for their failure to understand Him, since, though many centuries have elapsed, we, too, have but ineffectually apprehended His high ideals. Then, on the disciples' side, there possibly lurked no little disappointment, for things were not happening as they had hoped. Another journey northward was needed, so that He might privately repeat the instruction He had been giving and prepare them more fully for their future work. Enlightenment came to them gradually as to the blind man whom Jesus healed. At first it was a blurred vision of men like walking trees; only with the Master's repeated touch could perfect clearness be gained. The burden of His disciples' intractability may have pressed upon Jesus almost as heavily as the guilt of the hostile Pharisees. He sorrowed that Israel was rejecting Him, for He was conscious of being the touchstone of the nation's life; through Him God was offering the alternatives of life and death—of inward spiritual renewal, or of historic retribution.

<sup>1</sup> Mark vii. 13-21; Matt. xvi. 4-12.

## CHAPTER IV

### PETER'S CONFESSION AT CÆSAREA PHILIPPI

1. AN incident which occurred on this second journey northward constituted a momentous crisis in the history of the Twelve, and in the graduated disclosure of the claims of the Lord Jesus. After weeks of wandering Jesus and His disciples approached the beautiful city of Cæsarea Philippi. Many writers have described the noble architecture and natural beauty of this city of a famous name; but, for most of us, its charm lies principally in the visit of Jesus to this neighbourhood; and the value of all discoveries about this city would be augmented, did we but know that Jesus passed through its gates. His greatness as an historic character throws a lustre on any place with which He was connected. The passage of His life which links itself with Cæsarea Philippi can only be understood, however, on the condition that the reader shall, as far as possible, disembarass his mind of conventional ideas of the Divinity and Messiahship of Jesus. Fresh impressions of the historic man are of infinitely higher value than foregone dogmatic conclusions. Instead of beginning where Athanasius left off, we would fain go back in thought to the troubled transition period of the disciples' training, and look upon Jesus with their wondering, inquiring eyes and awakening faith. Many might be found to confess that, while they have resolutely sought to contemplate Jesus simply as a great man in history, they have been impelled by the logic of their successive admissions to return again to the mysterious formulæ of the creeds as setting forth more adequately than naturalism the manifold impressions made by Jesus. Still, it is probable that every effort to renew the historical impression of His complex, mysterious Personality, carries the mind a little nearer to the reality. The life of Jesus developed with answering fulness to the stimuli of human environment; He was at no time insensible to the appeal of national affairs, although throughout His crowded life He retained a profound consciousness of the governing influence of His Heavenly Father. In conventional presentments of

Jesus, He has been described as though He lived in an impenetrable sphere, where He was psychologically free from the influences of earth. While, however, it is perceived with increasing clearness that He was no common man, but a unique Personality, still He was not detached from laws which rule the soul's growth: it was in the maelstrom of great affairs that His Ministry took shape. Deep called unto deep, and the pressure of other minds and incidents upon Him evoked a deepening, definitive sense of His mission and a clarifying vision of the Way of Sorrow which led to its fulfilment. This recognition of these external factors in our Lord's life does not lessen our appreciation of the autonomy He displayed; He could not be coerced into any loss of self-mastery, and yet the very genius of His career was that it was worked out in fullest reciprocity with all the factors operant in the plexus of human relationships.

2. For Jesus Himself, as also for the disciples, these were weeks of sad questioning and trial. The very vehemence of His subsequent rebuke of Simon's suggestion, that it would not be needful for the Christ to suffer, indicates that it was the specific temptation which he had wrestled against during this *Wanderleben*. He had not failed to perceive, from an early period of His Ministry, that He must go counter to the popular Messianism, still, when it actually came about that both Judæa and Galilee rejected Him as a mere pretender, He was keenly sensitive to the humiliation. He was wounded with disappointment in the house of His friends, and His Ministry became overshadowed with presentiments of evil. He wavered not an instant in His loyalty to the Ideal given to Him, but His own stability of purpose gave Him no immunity from natural grief. This popular rejection of His claims gave Him, however, the long-looked-for opportunity of instructing His disciples. And during this period of wandering we must imagine His frequent retirement to places where the disciples might listen to Him without distraction. His special themes were the nature of God's Reign and the Spiritual ministry of the Messiah, varied by occasional warnings against the leaven of the Pharisees. In Dante's biography, we see how the banishment from Florence, against which the poet raged in wounded patriotism, gave both the leisure from high politics and the spiritual discipline needed to enable him to write his vision of the Soul's pilgrimage through Hell, Purgatory and



Paradise. Similarly, the exile of Jesus gave to His great soul a new discipline of suffering, and prepared Him for new insights into the significance of His own mission. The content, applicability and value of the ideas most intimately possessed by the mind are not fully known until they have been exploited in all possible variations of experience; until sorrow as well as joy comes to the soul, one does not know with adequacy the potency and resource of his own intuitions. In this shadowed passage of Christ's Ministry, while He found opportunities for instructing His disciples, He was entering more deeply into the heritage of His own thoughts, acquiring new insights, and bracing His will to meet the enlarged demands upon His initiative and endurance. Even prior to this period He had caught fore-glimpses of the ultimate trials through which He must pass; and now at every crisis the words of Caiaphas, which in all probability had been reported to Him, would leap to remembrance with added weight of meaning. Jesus did not flinch, however, from the tragic issues of His mission as the deepening shadows closed upon Him: while appeals came to Him to make concessions to the popular Messianism, He maintained a steadfast mind. His meat and drink was to do the Father's will, and since He had received the chrism of the Spirit this conscience had been His pole-star—fixed and luminous; and thus guided He never wavered as He saw the road narrowing down into one long avenue at the end of which He already perceived the dim shadow of the Roman Cross.

3. If we could be sure that St. John's account of the crisis of uncertainty and of the decisive choice made by the apostles is identical with the record of experiences of these weeks of trial which culminated at Cæsarea Philippi, considerable enlightenment would be thrown upon the method and amount of liberty employed by the respective evangelists. As already indicated, we incline to treat the Johannine account<sup>1</sup> as a succinct summary of a real apostolic reminiscence of the fluctuations of belief going on among the people at this period, and of Simon's bold Messianic confession on behalf of the disciples. If this surmise be correct then St. John's narrative affords us a valuable historic supplement to the Petrine tradition found in St. Mark. The general view is that the Petrine tradition is told in its earliest

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 64-71.



form in St. Mark, and that the author of St. Matthew has given only another version of the accepted narrative. It may be noted in passing that it is fallacious to imagine that one historical writing must be more correct than another because it is the earlier version. It is common knowledge that a later historian has often a better chance of giving a true representation of a variously reported occurrence. It ought not to be assumed that St. Matthew is less reliable than St. Mark, even should it be proved that the first-named evangelist used the work of his forerunner. With this general precaution we pass to observe that both these two evangelists are agreed in representing that the incident which took place near the city of Cæsarea Philippi, was the culmination of a process and the turning-point in the ministry of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> While in St. Luke's narrative the quality of vivid and graphic portraiture is characteristically weakened in comparison with St. Mark's account, still, the third evangelist appears to me to give the true psychology of the moment; and this he does, perhaps accidentally, in an introductory sentence which, in its superficial inconsistency, suggests the frayed ends of a literary suture. "As He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him." Although He was with His disciples, yet He was alone in so far as their thoughts were remote from His. Jesus ever stood in closer relation to His Heavenly Father than to His human friends. His mood was one of quivering intensity and eager interrogation. He was engaged in mystic dialogue with the Divine Spirit; perhaps the disciples observed His lips moving as one who spake with an unseen friend, and they knew that even as they walked toward the city, He prayed. Yet as He turned a frequent wistful gaze upon them, they must have anticipated the disclosure of some new thing in the ministry of their Lord. Thus, by juxtaposition of all four narratives, we get a complex, vivid impression of a culminating moment in the history of the disciples; we catch the sense of stress and strain, of trial and uncertainty, of proximity to Jesus in the flesh and remoteness in feeling, of vacillation and doubt crossed by flashes of sympathy; and in the Mind of Jesus, too, there was going on a high debate; He was wounded by the sudden desertion of the fickle crowds; He was weighing alternative rights and duties which seemed in conflict; He was seeking to know the will of His Father, and He was anxious about the

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 27ff; Matt. xvi. 13ff.

understanding and loyalty of His disciples. "As He was praying alone . . . the disciples were with Him."

4. And what was the thing that loomed so tragically upon His inward vision and thrilled His soul so strangely? It was the outward form of the Cross—made, as one has said, of collision and paradox,—which was destined to give the final shape and contour to His dedicated spirit of complete surrender to the will and purpose of the Heavenly Father. The self-giving which had hitherto characterized His Ministry was now to be touched into absolute sacrifice of self. In a general manner Jesus had apprehended the whole body of ethical truth and spiritual relationship in the temptation which met Him at the beginning of His public life; but, as light is manifested only when it impinges upon an object, so the inner implications and practical issues of truth are perceived only when it is applied to the concrete problems of life. After His collisions with the authorities and leaders of national life, Jesus could not but foresee the inevitable, grim results of His struggle against the falsehood and formalism of His age. From the Mountain so exceedingly high, whereon He had in spirit repelled the Satanic suggestion to pursue a political ideal, Jesus may have seen in the far distance the possibility of suffering such as ever confronts the true Servant of God; but then, in subsequent months, the winding path of His experience as He pursued His tasks was not unattractive and void of gracious episodes: now, however, He had come to a point of elevation,—the green pastures and still waters were all passed by,—and looking forward and downward He saw a dreary, hard road, at the end of which there stood the shameful gallows. The world's greatest benefactors have been its sufferers—men and women who have dedicated their lives to noble enthusiasms and worthy ends. The element of spiritual value in such remediable suffering is not the blind, brute endurance of unescapable physical afflictions, but the voluntary sacrifice of self in varying degrees for the good of nations. The Hebrew prophets were martyrs of righteousness, who by their loyalty to Jehovah formed a spiritual Israel—a real Church within the nation. No one will imagine that the fidelity unto death of Socrates, in his resolute quest for truth, has been without beneficent effect in the intellectual progress of the world. And as we think of Galileo, Dante, Milton, and a host of others,

we perceive that suffering has been an unescapable condition of intellectual and spiritual advancement. At the head of these roadmakers of history stands Jesus, who declared "I am the Way,"—unique in greatness, preëminent in suffering. With their indisputable claim to greatness, we cannot but detect at times, in the lives of Jeremiah and all who are represented by the tremendous dramatic character of Job, a certain querulous interrogation and complaint: so that we are more than half inclined to accept the Greek notion of a Nemesis working at times slowly and secretly, at times openly and climactically, in avenging some hidden wrong or turbulent pride in its victims. "For a message, newly sent from snow-crowned Parnassus, hath darted like a flash, bidding us do all to track the unknown man. Deep in the woodland wild he roams, 'mid caves and rocks, e'en as a bull forlorn and wretched on a path of woe, seeking to shun the oracle spoken at earth's centre; but it lives on for aye and hovers round him ever."<sup>1</sup> The uniqueness of the Sufferings of Jesus lay in His marvellous freedom of all consciousness of personal sin, so that He did not regard His inflictions as bearing aught of punishment for Himself. Having already fought the inward battle and conquered all self-will, this Man of Sorrows now looked forward to a fate of unexcelled ignominy, not indeed without inward tremors and tense excitement of spirit, but with unwavering courage and moral conviction of Truth and Right.

5. But the work that Jesus had to do depended upon His disciples as well as on Himself; the end in view was not merely one of self-discipline, but also the training of the Twelve: hence, He suddenly awoke from His reverie, and startled His gloomy, vacillating followers with the inquiry, "Who do men say that I am?" We have learned already that the apparent egotism of Jesus was but the mask of noblest altruism: such a question sprang not from the common disease of vanity, but from His consciousness of Himself as the revelation of God's Reign in the world. How far this question was simply an introduction to the more pertinent one that followed, and how far it arose from a real desire to know what men were saying about His work, cannot be decided with any exactitude. Jesus certainly could not have been indifferent to the attitude of the people, since

<sup>1</sup> *Œdipus the King*, by Sophocles, trans. by E. P. Coleridge.

their tone of speech about Himself was clearly indicative of their moral relationship toward God. He knew that many were keenly disappointed in that He refused to be the Messiah of political hopes; but now He learned from His disciples that there were still a number of thoughtful people who believed Him to be a great prophet like John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah; that, while the Pharisees and leaders of the national life ascribed to Him some devilish inspiration, some of the people believed that He was divinely commissioned as a Messenger of truth. But this reply from His disciples evoked a more direct appeal: "But you—who do you say that I am?" It was a moment of supreme importance in the discipline of the Twelve—a fact manifest in the emotion betrayed by the Master. He had stripped from their minds, or had sought to strip from their minds, every vestige of the popular delusion about His Messianic functions; and now He thrust upon them the suggestion that He is the Messiah in a deeper, nobler and more spiritual way. Jesus longed to have them believe in Him, since the Kingdom of God hinged upon this faith; and until they had acknowledged Him to be the true Christ, it was impossible to make them understand what work He had to do. In the momentary silence which followed, their very hearts were searched with the vibrant appeal; there was no escape from the constraint of this solemn interrogation. However long the silence seemed, it really endured only a few moments: then Simon, touched by the exaltation of the Master's mood, spoke as one in ecstasy, "Thou art the Christ," adding, maybe, St. Matthew's phrase, "the Son of the living God." It was a Divine revelation to the man—a flash of intuition, which drew into itself the best thoughts, feelings and experiences of the past two years. The lowly origin of the Carpenter, the familiarity of daily intercourse, the shocks of disappointment, the delay of hopes making the heart sick, the haughty repudiation of Jesus by the authorized teachers of Israel, and the ebbing tide of His popularity in Galilee, might have almost justified a fisherman's inability to decide this momentous question. But, in spite of all doubts and dread uncertainties, there was that in Simon's soul which leapt up in answer to the Master's word,—leal-heartedness and a sudden sense of the greatness of the Reality in Jesus;—impelled by this Spirit, he trampled down all doubts, all prudent cautions and reservations, and burst out in enthusiastic confession of faith and loyalty. St. John, if he



records the same moment, gives a variant report, but a confession essentially identical with that in the Synoptics, "For our part we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God."

6. We make no unprovable claim that our Lord's recorded reply reproduces His very words; but who can doubt that this impassioned eulogy breathes the passionate gratitude which filled the heart of Jesus at that moment?

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona!  
 For flesh and blood did not reveal that to thee;  
 It was My Father who is in heaven.  
 And I tell thee,  
 Thou art Peter; and on this rock I will build My community,  
 And the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.  
 I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,  
 And whatsoever thou shalt prohibit on earth shall be prohibited in  
 heaven;  
 And whatever thou shalt permit on earth shall be permitted in heaven."

Only the nausea of endless controversy could suggest that this text is an ecclesiastical invention; for, while it gives the impression of naturalness on the lips of Jesus and harmonizes with our general notion of His character, it seems utterly beyond the scope of apostolic imagination. The mere juxtaposition of Jesus' swift rebuke of Simon's subsequent remonstrance with this glowing eulogy, is sufficient to vindicate the Gospels from all accusations of unverity and romance; but this matchless tribute of praise and the stern censure are recorded because Jesus actually uttered them. This encomium is the overflow of the Master's joyous appreciation of faith; it is not the artificial product of theological reasoning; it is patently the spontaneous, glad recognition of the disciple's assured faith. We wonder not to detect the thrill of ecstasy in the answer of Jesus, for the whole purpose of His Ministry had been to lead His followers up to this faith. His cause was now assured; His Church should be built upon the character created by this confession; He no longer doubts the capacity and reliability of the men whom Simon represented: but to Simon himself, as the confessing apostle, He promises the keys of His community and the power of legislating for His Church. It is but just to the claims of some distinguished scholars to acknowledge that the clause relating to the building



of His Church (*καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*) is regarded as a late interpolation in St. Matthew, or as evidence of the late date of his gospel. No author before Tertullian refers to it; and such an omission, by advocates of the Petrine authority of the Roman Church, is well-nigh unaccountable if the clause be authentic. Wendt ventures to reconstruct the passage thus: "Happy art thou, Simon Bar-Jona. Thou art Peter, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against thee." Another distinguished scholar writes, "It is not a question of whether Jesus gathered a circle of intimate companions, whom He trained to propagate His ideas, or of how far He anticipated a future career for them which would involve His memory and spirit as their religious authority. The question is whether, with His belief in His own speedy return and the evident limits by which His outlook was beset, Jesus could have laid down the details of an ecclesiastical structure<sup>1</sup> which presupposed a settled and expanding future; in a word, whether Jesus, the religious Idealist, the prophet, the martyr, was also the religious organizer." It is sufficient at this point to state what we shall seek to prove in a subsequent chapter, that Jesus did look forward to the future, and prepare for its needs by consciously laying the foundations of His Church.

7. The fact of tremendous moment upon which stress must be laid is that Jesus accepted the terms of Simon's confession; and thus, while He repudiates the *popular conception* of the Messianic work, He claimed explicitly to be the true Messiah. Baur, in his historical survey of the origins of Christianity, lays emphasis upon this Messianic idea in the teaching of Jesus and in the growth of the Church as central, organic and conservative in the new Religion. He says, "Had not the Messianic Idea, the idea in which Jewish hopes had their profoundest expression, fixed itself on the Person of Jesus, and caused Him to be regarded as the Messiah, who had come for the redemption of His people, and in whom the promise to the fathers was fulfilled, the belief in Him could never have had a power of such far-reaching influence in history."<sup>2</sup> There are not a few who believe it would have been wiser had Jesus discarded a title marked by ambiguity and limitation. But Jesus did not cut Himself off from the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 15f.

<sup>2</sup> *The First Three Christian Centuries*, vol. i., p. 37, Eng. Ed.

historic past. He came to fulfil, not to destroy; He saw the Divine preparation in the election and discipline of Israel, and sought to conserve and complete all that "the Law and the Prophets" had begun. The reproach of the Jews fell upon Him not because He called Himself the Messiah, but because He definitely and insistently repudiated the accepted interpretation of the Messianic office. It was no new claim that He suddenly sprang upon His unprepared disciples; at Cæsarea Philippi He only drew into explicit utterance what had been implied from the beginning of His Ministry. There was nothing novel in the application of this name to Jesus, for the disciples had followed Him because they hoped it was He who should be the Messiah. But the true inwardness and originality of Simon's confession lay in the faith that Jesus was the true and only Christ, in spite of His renunciation of political and temporal power. The silence of Jesus during all the previous months about His Messiahship was due to no uncertainty in His own mind, but to the danger involved in any premature emphasis upon a title so full of political significance in that age. It was one of the things that the disciples could not bear until they had passed the crisis at Capernaum which resulted in the rejection of Jesus by the leaders of the people. But the time had come for the breaking through of all reserve, for the declaration of the full self-consciousness of Jesus. How utterly immune from fanaticism He was in making this claim becomes apparent as we study the meaning He put into it.

8. The self-disclosure of Jesus was graduated and fitted to meet the advancing intelligence and moral growth of His disciples. By His teaching Jesus had made the purely national ideal of the Messiah the vehicle of a mighty spiritual claim to be King over men's minds and hearts. As He appropriated the title, He transformed its content by associating it anew with the Isaianic conception of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. As Prince Gautama in India had received the ideal-title of the Buddha—"the enlightened One"<sup>1</sup>—so Jesus received this national

<sup>1</sup>"But here is the difference between Buddhism and Christianity. There is no trace of Messianic prophecies in India. The expectation of a Buddha has never been traced in pre-Buddhistic writings. All we can say is that the idiomatic phrase of 'the blind will see, and the lame will walk,' existed in the ancient language of India, and was adopted by the Buddhists like many others." Max Müller, *Physical Religion*, app. xv.

title of "the anointed One," and by His teaching and life gave it a connotation as broad as humanity. In claiming to be the Messiah, Jesus did but explicate the official consciousness in His self-chosen name—the Son of Man; and it is by the correlation and interpenetration of these two titles that we read aright the meaning of each. As Son of Man Jesus identified Himself with our race; yet as His disciples grew more and more impressed by His transcendence, uniqueness and preëminence, they chose to call Him the Son of God. Israel had been regarded as Jehovah's Son; and, in applying this name to Jesus, the disciples gave an implied recognition to the fact that in Him all the spiritual value of the chosen race was embodied. In confessing Jesus to be the Son of God the disciples spoke, not as schoolmen, but simply as enthusiastic believers in their Lord Jesus, expressing thus their ineradicable conviction that He was divinely sent to bring in the Reign of God. And in every succeeding age, as men have sought some formula of confession, to answer the question Jesus asked at Cæsarea Philippi, they have been forced back again and again upon the inspired language of the Galilean fisherman: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." After passing through the whole gamut of speculation concerning the mystery of His personality, and after unconsciously reproducing all the succession of insights and errors which have been tested by the Church Councils, men confess that for them Jesus is the Son of Man and the Son of God. Although we are indebted not a little to Simon Peter for his brave loyalty and inspired intuition at Cæsarea Philippi, it must not be imagined that he and his fellow-disciples were emancipated at once from the thralldom of conventional opinions; they had to work out their own salvation in subsequent trials, fighting doubts, vacillations and the despondency of temporary defeat. Still, it remains true that the minds of these disciples had been caught up by the breath of Divine inspiration, and they were given a revelation of the real office of Jesus as the Spiritual Messiah of our race. This glorious intuition was simply the fore-gleam of that enduring illumination attained unto through the experience of the chrism of the Holy Spirit; and when the Pentecost had fully come, the disciples entered into the heritage of this faith, which had been so slowly acquired. And in face of the strong humanitarian naturalism of modern thought, we see not how we can abandon the historicity of this revelation of the Christhood of Jesus and yet retain the dis-

inctive and dynamical faith of the Christian religion. Once admit that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah and, unless His sanity be denied, this admission carries with it an indubitable proof of His transcendence, and a whole series of implications belonging to faith in the supernatural.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MESSIAH'S FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION<sup>1</sup>

I. THE consciousness of Jesus that He was the Messiah, whether due to intuition or the result of study of the Old Testament and meditation upon the prophecies, shows that He believed Himself to fulfil the chief end of Israel's Divine election:—the purpose wherewith God had chosen Abraham was realized in Jesus of Nazareth. This claim to be the Messiah was an expression of the continuity of Divine revelation in the history of mankind, and a disclosure of the mediatorial significance of Christ's person. When the implications of this claim to be the Messiah are thought out, we find ourselves in possession of a philosophy of history, and learn, too, that St. Paul's argument concerning the Divine "Prothesis" was logically involved in the self-consciousness of Jesus. "This is the true theodicy, the justification of God in history. The human spirit is capable of being reconciled with the course of past and present history only when it sees that that which has happened and which is daily happening has been and is, not only not without God, but in an essential sense the work of God Himself."<sup>2</sup> In Hebrew thought and hopes, the Messianic ideal was national and limited; but in the mind of Jesus the national ideal effloresced into a realization of the Divine idea or plan in the whole of humanity. In calling Himself the Messiah, therefore, Jesus of Nazareth renounced not only the marring selfishness of individualism, but also the national delimitation of the ideal. As the Son of Man He perceived the Spirit and purpose of God in all men, and said, "Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God!" The seeming egoism in the repeated claims of Jesus to be the Messiah sprang from this law of obedience to the Divine Will. We have seen that it was with infinite carefulness that He trained His disciples, strip-

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 31; ix. 1; Matt. xvi. 21-28; Luke ix. 22-27.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel, *Philosophy of the State and of History*, An Exposition by G. S. Morris, p. 306.



ping their minds of popular misconceptions, in which even John the Baptist shared, and yet so preparing them that in the hour of disappointment and disillusionment Simon avowed their belief that He was, nevertheless, the true Messiah of God. But the eulogy that reveals the Master's joy in this confession is followed by a prohibition of any immediate annunciation of His office by the disciples. He would fain avoid any premature step which might revive popular belief in His political power and precipitate the hostility of the Pharisees into open violence. The next stage in the instruction of His disciples consisted in explaining the suffering which God's Anointed was called upon to pass through. From this time, as the two first evangelists show, a momentous change came into the character of Christ's teaching. He began to teach and show what things were about to befall Him.<sup>1</sup> There was a danger that in the following days Simon and His companions might lose the fine spiritual vision of the Ideal; and then, remembering only that the Master had accepted the Messianic ideal, they might become obsessed by materialistic hopes and fond dreams of imperial glory. Such false optimism would impart a new boldness to their demeanour; but if this began to appear, Jesus at once repressed it by teaching that the Messiah was to be rejected and killed. Herein is seen the wonderful originality of Jesus. In an age immersed in popular delusions concerning the restoration of the Davidic dynasty, He alone perceived the meaning and application of the gracious, sad prophecy that Jehovah's Servant must suffer and die.

2. With almost prophetic insight Plato had described the conflict between justice and injustice in the world, between truth and popular delusions, issuing in a destiny of suffering for anyone who realized the perfect ideal of justice: "They will tell you that the just man who is thought unjust will be scourged, racked, bound—will have his eyes burnt out; and at last, after suffering every kind of evil, he will be impaled."<sup>2</sup> Jesus, too, has learned this strange, sad lesson; and, having surrendered His own will to the Father's, He was willing to suffer as well as teach, to die as well as heal; and He now began to prepare His disciples for this end. Inquiry is sometimes made as to when Jesus Himself first gained a clear prevision of the final tragedy;

<sup>1</sup> Mark, *καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν*; Matt., *ἀπο τότε ἤρξατο Ἰησοῦς δεικνύειν, κ. τ. λ.*

<sup>2</sup> *Plato, Jowett's trans., bk. ii., 361.*

to this we have no conclusive answer. During His temptation in the wilderness, as He paused awhile on the threshold of His Ministry, He saw clearly the alternative ideals of a political Messiahship such as was demanded by the populace, and a spiritual ministry of pure goodness in absolute obedience to the Divine Will. Voluntarily, Jesus preferred this and rejected that; and, instead of relying upon the favour of the fickle people, He went to His work saying, "Uphold me by Thy free spirit." We do not think that He saw all the events which were to happen at the end of His Ministry, although, through the absence of chronological arrangement in the Gospels, and through the natural proneness of the evangelists to interpret sayings and deeds in the light of the latest developments, contrary views on this matter are inevitable. Had He foreseen the Passion and the Cross as certain from the beginning, there would have been a histrionic or docetic character in His earlier attempts to persuade the Jews to accept Him as their Spiritual Messiah. There was a great difference between the first and the last parts of His Ministry. At the beginning the gracious form of the Son of Man moves in a golden light of morning; we seem to perceive a radiant joy in His presence as He walks with His disciples among the Galilean hills; at the end the sky is darkened, and the scene is that of a winter's stormy night, and He appears as the Man of Sorrows. The one abiding principle of His Ministry was His voluntary subjection to the will of His Heavenly Father. Any presentiment or prophetic anticipation of a tragic end, which may have sometimes shadowed His thought, belonged rather to His subliminal consciousness and not to His wakeful and surface self. It appears as though He really grasped the thought of His passion and death at the time of His withdrawal from Galilee into heathen territory, when He felt so keenly disappointed with those who had listened to His teaching. It seemed to Him that a great turning-point had come to Jerusalem; and when, by-and-by, He draws nigh and sees the city, He weeps over it, because its citizens had let pass a glorious opportunity. Even at the very end, He appears to have imagined that it might still be possible for His Father to spare Him the bitter cup; and this prayer of His in Gethsemane clashes somewhat with His clear forecast of His death made six months before. But while in the development of a drama, the process has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and the progress is always clearly seen from

stage to stage, the development of a soul's actual history is marked by many irregularities of movement, subtleties and apparent contradictions; for life is larger than logic, and often presents phases that are hard to reconcile. Hence it is not improbable that at some place near Cæsarea Philippi, and at a time separated but a little from the moment of Peter's Confession, Jesus gave a clear and precise statement that He should suffer and die a violent death. This prediction will afford some readers a decisive proof of His possession of supernatural knowledge; although, when we recall the struggles and conflicts Jesus had passed through, and if we believe that Caiaphas had already given his diabolic counsel that one should die for the nation, we find it not unnatural that Jesus should have foreseen the violent nature of His approaching death and the real authors of it—"the elders, and the high-priests and the scribes." What intensity of bitterness must have been added to our Lord's sense of failure by the fore-knowledge that He would be murdered by the legitimate representatives of the whole Jewish nation!

3. St. Mark makes it plain that this announcement of His approaching Passion was uttered, not once only, but again and again, so that His disciples should cherish no lingering doubts. He spoke of His death as necessary: "The Son of Man *must* (*δεῖ*) suffer much, and be rejected and be killed, and after three days rise again." Was this necessity an external inevitableness or a supernatural compulsion? Theologians are tempted to read a doctrinal significance into the word "*must*"; for ourselves, it implies the moral compulsion Jesus realized in His own soul to be faithful unto the end. He felt that He must go forward even unto death, not as an obstinate fanatic, but as one who was determined to obey His Heavenly Father. The necessity lay primarily in God's Will, and secondarily in the contradiction and antagonism to that Will offered by sinful men. It is of highest importance to observe the natural and close connection between the disciple's confession that Jesus was the Christ of God, and this declaration that as Messiah He must suffer and die at the hands of the national leaders of Israel. Simon was shocked by what seemed to him a grievous mood of pessimism, and taking hold of Jesus he began to chide Him, saying: "God forbid! this never shall befall Thee!" But the impetuous remonstrance is checked by a stern and terrible censure:

“Get behind Me, Satan! Thou art a hindrance to Me!  
Thy mind is not on the affairs of God, but on the affairs of men!”

Simon's headlong words stirred a tumult in the breast of the Son of Man, and tempted Him over again to choose an easier way than that of the Cross: hence the startling and vehement rebuke, which seems to us scarce merited by the impetuous, errant disciple. At the same time the condemnation was intended not merely for this one man, but for all who imagined that the Messiah could not fail and suffer and die; and as Jesus uttered it, He turned and looked upon all the company. The unrivalled supremacy of Jesus makes us diffident in speaking of the struggles He passed through; and yet the Gospels show clearly that He had to fight and agonize with temptations until the eve of His Crucifixion. He had to deal not only with the hostility of the rulers and Pharisees, but the still more difficult sollicitations of His own friends. Evidently the ardent dissuasions of worldly-minded disciples made it harder for Jesus to refuse the allurements of a low and material Messianism.

4. Wherefore ought Messiah to suffer and die? Notwithstanding His swift censure of Simon's remonstrance, Jesus Himself had to find some answer to this inquiry. The full meaning of this sacrifice was probably unfolded only in a gradual manner as He stepped forward to meet the Cross. The first clear fact about this moral necessity was found in the universal law of sacrifice that conditions every advance in the higher history of man. St. Mark states<sup>1</sup> that Jesus called the multitude and began to inculcate this principle upon them; but this seems like a confusion of the original scene, as Jesus at this time was making a private journey, and devoting Himself especially to the instruction of the Twelve. The *logion* itself carries conviction of its authenticity: “If any man is minded (*θέλει*) to come after Me, let him disown himself (*ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτόν*) and let him take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever is minded to save his life shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall save it. For what profit is it for a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what could a man give in exchange for his life? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of

<sup>1</sup> Mark viii. 34-38.



him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His Father's Glory with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, that there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the coming of God's reign in power." With characteristic leniency toward the disciples, St. Luke omits the Lord's censure of Simon, and, by introducing the word "daily," makes the cross-bearing refer to the common experiences of ethical life. But whatever the exact phraseology may have been, it is evident that Jesus treats His passion and death as a supreme instance of a universal moral law; He died to live. Only by suppressing the selfish and lower impulses can man gain advance in his nobler and higher nature. There is an infinite value in the soul which makes a struggle against the lower nature a moral obligation. The pagan ideal of self-culture does not carry life to such a height as Christ's law of self-sacrifice. Then, too, sorrow enters into every life as a Divine discipline, and in following Jesus this discipline is not relaxed; it is intensified. The Master's repugnance to self-indulgence, however, never led Him into a doctrine of asceticism. In following Him, men pursue no artificial quest for suffering; but crises will come to them when the pain to be endured shall be as that borne by a man who carries the cross by which he is to die a death of fearful shame. Besides the inward struggle to be faithful to God's will, Christ's disciples would suffer antagonism from the world. There is ever a conflict going on between the spirit of Truth and the spirit of the world; reason will clash with tradition, spirituality of aim with men's self-glorification; and in this strife the followers of Jesus must evince a moral heroism that will not shrink even from martyrdom. Thus did Jesus associate His sufferings and death with the experiences shared by His disciples, and as the patient Servant of God He interpreted all these things as processes whereby God is cleansing and elevating the lives of men.

5. But, even in this coördination of Christ's sufferings with the heroic sacrifices made by His followers, we come upon a feature which differentiates Him from all others; for their trouble and cross-bearing are due to their resolution to *come after* Him. Should the phrase "for My sake" be eliminated from this passage, the idea it expresses occurs too habitually in Christ's teaching for us not to see in it a supreme motive for self-



sacrifice in the disciples' attachment to His person. Confession of His Messiahship will inevitably lead them to pain, struggle and death; but this does not prevent Jesus from claiming this confession. He claims more than any other; He speaks not only as prophet and martyr, but as Messiah and Lord. He calls men to renounce mere earthly felicity and success, in order that they may follow Him, although obedience to His call would bring perpetual cross-bearing. The character of His Person gives a preëminent value to His death. He is the author and finisher of our faith. If these words were spoken in the hearing of the crowd, none of them would follow Him farther under the delusion of gaining temporal profit. There are other features in His voluntary endurance of pain and death which will, however, disclose themselves to us as we trace the farther progress of His Ministry.

6. Connected with this first announcement of His Passion is the exultant certitude of His Resurrection. It is not to be wondered at that many should surmise that this triumphant anticipation was created and interpolated after the faith in His Resurrection had possessed the Christian Church. However, these words are apparently as authentic as the prediction of His death; and if we credit the one it is questionable if we have any right to reject the other. For myself, I confess if the Lord did rise from the dead, it is no difficult thing to believe that He foresaw His Resurrection. Jesus was bound to ask, if death was inevitable, what then would become of Himself, and what influence would His death ultimately wield for men. It seems plain enough that Jesus anticipated a final triumph; and this it was that deceived the disciples. There are two other difficulties which meet us as we consider this matter: Would not the clear prevision of His Resurrection rob suffering of all its bitterness? Our only answer is, Yes, indeed, were the suffering only physical; but we find in the Passion of Christ a spiritual anguish which is unparalleled, and therefore inscrutable to our understanding. But if Jesus thus so clearly foretold His Resurrection on the third day, how is it that the prediction occurred to no one of the disciples at the time of His death? So far as can now be known, they were so entirely obsessed by dreams of His world-triumph as the Jewish Messiah, that His anticipations of death and resurrection after Simon's first horror must have been treated as

metaphors, or vague figures of speech, whose meaning they could only dimly guess at. While we feel all the force of these natural difficulties, and wonder how the evangelists failed to perceive the objections that were bound to arise, it is our belief that Jesus actually saw the light beyond the tomb, and spoke of His Resurrection and apocalyptic glory.

BOOK VI  
SELF-DEDICATION UNTO DEATH



## CHAPTER I

### THE TRANSFIGURATION

I. THE momentous confession of Simon at Cæsarea Philippi, together with the glorification of Jesus on the Mount, constitutes one of the watersheds of His Ministry; and from this elevation the mind glances forward to the self-sacrifice of the Cross. But since criticism must precede all our attempts to reconstruct the broken image of Christ's Ministry, it may be at once acknowledged that the exceptional character of this incident of the Transfiguration has necessarily provoked considerable scepticism about its historicity; and not a few Christian scholars have sought refuge in the notion that it is a piece of imaginative symbolism. Once again Buddhist literature affords a parallel with the Gospel story; just as Shâkyamuni passed through his temptation under the Bôdhi-tree without being overawed or injured by the fierce hatred of the evil spirits, so he is also said to have passed through a transfiguration similar to that of Jesus. "And the Tathâgata's body appeared shining like a flame, and he was beautiful above all expression. . . . The Blessed One said, There are two occasions on which a Tathâgata's appearance becomes clear and exceeding bright: In the night, Ananda, in which a Tathâgata (' Perfect One ') attains to the supreme and perfect insight, and in the night in which he passes finally away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever of his earthly existence to remain."<sup>1</sup> This parallel in the story of Gautâma has shaken the faith of many in the New Testament incident; but the late Prof. F. Max Müller pointed out that such duplications might just as reasonably be treated as corroborations of Christianity: "If I do find in certain Buddhist works doctrines identically the same as in Christianity, so far from being frightened, I feel delighted; for surely truth is not the less true because it is believed by the majority of the human race." Gautâma was one

<sup>1</sup> "The Sacred Books of the East": The *Mahâparinibbânasuttanta*, iv. 47-52; *The Book of the Great Decease*, vol. xi.



of the unconscious prophets of the Gospel; and his life and teaching, both in form and substance, in spite of the radical defect of all Buddhism, was a veritable foreshadowing of the Divine Ideal.<sup>1</sup> The Story of the Transfiguration must be tested, as the records of other miracles, by the laws of historical evidence, and the supreme presumption for belief will be found in its inherent harmony with our general impression of Jesus. Like Simmias, we feel all the difficulties, but we dare not allow these to prevent us from making full inquiry into all the evidences accessible. "I feel myself (and I daresay that you have the same feeling) how hard, or rather impossible, is the attainment of any certainty about questions such as these in the present life. And yet I should deem him a coward who did not prove what is said about them to the uttermost, or whose heart failed him before he had examined them on every side. For he should persevere until he has achieved one of two things: either he should discover or be taught the truth about them; or, if this be impossible, I would have him take the best and most irrefragable of human theories, and let this be the raft upon which he sails through life—not without risk, as I admit, if he cannot find some word of God which will more surely and safely carry him."<sup>2</sup> The Divine Word which shall prove our guide amid the perils of the historical investigation of the Gospels is, as we have already proved, the actual impression made upon the mind by Jesus in all that we certainly know of Him.

2. Some rationalists of a by-gone day, sensitive to the cumulative presumptions of truth in the threefold repetition of the Transfiguration narrative,<sup>3</sup> made a rather bizarre suggestion that the story arose from a meeting between Jesus and two white-robed Essene friends on a mountain at night. Subsequent criticism connected the scene with the oracle of the coming of a prophet "like unto Moses," making out that in this association Jesus would be mythically assimilated to his great forerunner

<sup>1</sup> "I must confess that I was startled also when I read for the first time that at the incarnation of Buddha, 'a great light appeared, the blind received their sight, the deaf heard a noise, the dumb spake one with another, the crooked became straight, the lame walked,' etc. But on more careful consideration, I soon found that this phrase, as it occurs in Buddhism and Christianity, had its independent antecedents in the tradition both of Judæa and of India." Max Müller, *Physical Religion*, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Phædo*, 85, Jowett's trans.

<sup>3</sup> Mark ix. 2-13; Matt. xvii. 1-13; Luke ix. 28-36.

by becoming the subject of a glorious illumination. Even orthodox divines have inferred from St. Luke's mention of the disciples being heavy with sleep, that the scene must have been "visionary." God might use a dream of the three disciples as a medium of revelation, just as in the dim dawn of Israel's history Jacob had been awakened to the Divine mystery by a dream. Should this dream-theory gain a wide acceptance, it would be inferred that since one identical vision filled the minds of the disciples, Jesus may have wielded a hypnotic influence and suggestion over them, the bright visitants from the celestial world being but the visualized forms of Christ's own thoughts. Yet it may be that, after long and careful examination of all the criticisms and hypotheses, the mind will swing back to the belief that, however inexplicable the incident, it really occurred as described in the Gospels. One strong presumption against its historicity is the omission of this narrative from the Fourth Gospel. This story would have given some support to Abbé Loisy's unproved hypothesis, that "the Johannine Christ is presented as a transcendent Being, who is not of this earth, and who seems to speak and act only to satisfy the terms of His definition, to prove that He is God and one with God."<sup>1</sup> There may be an allusion, however, to this incident in the assurance which underlies the whole Gospel, "And we beheld His majesty, majesty such as the only Son has from the Father full of grace and truth." Moreover, it is not incredible that memories of this glory blended in later years with the Patmos visions of St. John. Our uncertainty concerning the real authorship of the Second Epistle of St. Peter prevents us from laying much stress upon the testimony found in it of the Transfiguration; although, if we accept Professor Ramsay's suggestion<sup>2</sup> that the author was a pupil of Peter's, who reproduced his master's teaching in new and later circumstances, the definite allusion to the glorification of Jesus acquires great weight as historical evidence. The self-effacing author writes, "We were admitted to the spectacle of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased: and this voice we heard out of heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount."<sup>3</sup> The force of this

<sup>1</sup> *Autour d'un petit livre*, pp. 90, 91. Quoted by Rev. Vincent McNabb, O. P., *Expos. Times*, January, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> *The Church in the Roman Empire*, pp. 492, 493.   <sup>3</sup> II Peter i. 16-18.

testimony is heightened in that it follows the well-known protestation that believers did not follow cleverly devised myths. Still, those who are compelled to look upon the story as a gracious legend, alike with those who treat it as historical, may find in it great lessons and spiritual meanings, although they lose its significance for the Mind of Jesus Himself.

3. In adopting the position that the account of the Transfiguration is historically trustworthy, we neither dismiss the difficulties belonging to it nor escape the obligation of offering some interpretation either as a natural or as a preternatural occurrence. We cannot lift it bodily beyond the range of historical criticism by merely terming it an idealization of some natural phenomenon; it has to be judged according to the canons of all literary and historical compositions. It is quite true that the first reporters of this scene were without the scientific training which would be demanded in modern literature; and there can be little question that had a Gibbon or a Strauss related the incident, it would have taken a different form. And yet the differences which would mark a twentieth-century account might not result altogether from increased intellectual acumen, but in part they would spring from changed presuppositions. There is strong probability that the first oral testimony of the Transfiguration came from the three who are said to have participated in it; and whatever may have been their failings as witnesses, Professor Paul Wernle's words are applicable to them at this point as much as at any other: "The apostles were animated by a lofty self-consciousness. They felt themselves to be the representatives of Jesus. They were continuing His work; as ambassadors for Christ they were ambassadors for God."<sup>1</sup> That this sense of solemn responsibility was transmitted to the evangelists is shown by the frank, earnest preface to the Third Gospel with its statement of the writer's method and aim. Sometimes the prohibition given to the three disciples against any premature communication of this marvellous incident until Jesus had died and risen again is treated as though it meant that they never gave any authoritative account of it. But if, as suggested, the story be fictitious, in what school did the artists learn their sobriety and restraint which give so much of the air of matter-of-factness to this invention? What possible motive could there

<sup>1</sup> *Beginnings of Christianity* (Eng. trans.), vol. i., p. 119.

be for fabrication and for a prohibition which could have no application whatever? It is easier to accept the mystery than to repudiate its historicity.

4. Whether the phenomena of the Transfiguration were objectively real or of the nature of a vision, must be decided on the grounds of internal evidence, although we strenuously resist any suggestion that the term "vision" connotes unreality. Analysis of the most ordinary sensuous perception results in a discovery of factors and processes which are as subjective as the play of faculty implied in describing the phenomena of spiritual vision. It is no easy task to draw a line of demarcation between sensuous and spiritual experience; and any clear-cut separation of subjective and objective factors in the mind's apprehension of phenomena is forbidden by enlightened psychology. There seem to be realms of consciousness where the familiar distinctions between matter and spirit fade away; where it appears that a kindling and fusion of sensuous and spiritual activities take place. Thus, for example, in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus it must ever remain a controvertible point whether the vision should be described as subjective or objective; still, no such ambiguity affects the explicit affirmation of St. Paul: "Last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared to me also." The eye never sees what the mind is unprepared for. It may be that the range of vision, even of sensuous perception, is marvellously increased by the activity of faith. The three disciples had passed through a period of preparation, and the vision of His glory came only after they had confessed their faith that Jesus was the Messiah. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and at times it lifts the veil, and we become conscious of a real, personal, Divine presence, and the mind is conscious of enlarged spiritual capacity. To change the figure, the tides of the great ocean of Divine life in which we live sweep into the little creeks of human personality, and if our souls be not drugged with sensualism we awaken to glorious and inspiring vision. If, then, we give provisional acceptance of the term "vision," we do not imply the operation of hysteria or of hallucination; nor do we suppose that the objective reality was absent in the Transfiguration of our Lord.

5. Passing from introductory discussions concerning the manner of approaching such a narrative as this, we have next to trace



the definite steps in the sublime experience of Jesus which culminated in His glorification. The first two evangelists state that it was six days after the conversation of Jesus near Cæsarea Philippi concerning the Messiah's sufferings; but the third affirms eight days—perhaps six nights and two additional days;—and this difference suggests that St. Luke may have had access to some other source than that found in St. Mark's gospel. Jesus took Peter, James and John up to a mountain "apart alone"; these three men constituted the inner circle of the disciple-band by reason of their special aptitudes and responsiveness to Christ's disclosures. The Master acted in accordance with the principle of Divine election, choosing men endowed with certain qualities and gifts that they might mediate the revelation for others. And just as Confucius foresaw the probable fate of Tsze-Lu (the Simon of his disciples), so Jesus may have anticipated the courses of service and of martyrdom which would open for these three men. While He followed the inward guidance of the Spirit's voice, He was also yielding to His natural desire for human sympathy. For a long time He had been seeking to train His disciples for a more advanced reception of spiritual truth, and the success He had attained in this brought Him nearer the goal of His Ministry. The Transfiguration marks a crisis in His own inward history; it had a greater meaning and value for Himself than it could possibly have for the disciples. In this fact lies the secret of the difficulty all expositors have realized in dealing with this incident; they have felt its intrinsic grandeur, and yet have garnered but a slender sheaf of spiritual lessons in their treatment of it. The truth is, surely, that the Transfiguration was designed for the preparation of Jesus Himself, and only secondarily for a revelation to the disciples. The transaction between the Heavenly Father and the Son must remain mysterious to us, since we fall short of the standard of manhood shown in Christ; for all who desire to penetrate its secret there must be asked "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened." The context of the incident in the Gospels is very significant; the story lies in a framework of passion-discourses; it is preceded and followed by Christ's own personal predictions of suffering, death and resurrection. The Transfiguration was the preparation of Christ for His exodus. On that mountain, Jesus laid Himself like another Isaac on the altar, and He knew that



the sacrifice would be demanded. The very glory of the event contains a hint of the struggle which had been going on in His mind. Jesus was no impassive hero of a romantic history; He was a Soul in the agony of a momentous spiritual transaction. The hour had come when He was to make a voluntary dedication of Himself for a sacrifice than which history knows no sublimer; and this self-consecration was destined to be met by a distinct communication of Divine approval. St. Luke observes that it was while Jesus was praying that the fashion of His countenance was changed. Such repeated allusions to the Master's prayers in the Third Gospel look like someone's authentic recollections of the habitual communion of Jesus with His unseen Father. Although it is characteristic of St. Luke to mention this exercise, it must not be imagined that the Evangelist has ventured a pious invention. The fragmentary records of His ejaculatory praises and petitions reveal Him to us as the true Son of Man conscious of His dependence upon the Divine Will. During His wanderings He had wrestled with the dark spectres of the mind, seeking for the guidance of His Heavenly Father. That this was no docetic experience is manifest in the vehemence of His censure of Simon's unconscious temptation of the Christ. In effect the disciple had said, Why not live and triumph? Although this interrogation was clothed in all the sophisticated plausibilities of self-love, Jesus had stripped away its disguises and showed it to be a Satanic solicitation to renounce the Divine appointment, devoting Himself whole-heartedly to a complete obedience to the Will of the Heavenly Father. The stress and strain of a prolonged struggle had left its mark upon Him, and His retreat to the Mountain with the three disciples expressed His craving for the sympathy both of friends and of God. He would fain have had the men watch while He prayed. He had already divined that His Passion was necessary for the establishment of the Divine Reign on earth, and now He longed to understand the Father's purpose in this predestined doom.

6. Tradition has identified the scene with Mount Tabor; but it is possible that Jesus had led His disciples to some height of the Hermon range, although the representation of a crowd waiting at the foot of the hill suggests Galilee as the more probable place. The main features of the story, however, are quite unaffected by uncertainty concerning the locality. As if

and yielded to Him the keys of the Word of God. While the glorious light was radiating from His face, these two immortal spirits conversed with Jesus of His exodus, which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. This stately and solemn announcement of their theme is pregnant with the consciousness of a Divine predestination.<sup>1</sup> Once again it may be repeated, the Passion idea dominates the Transfiguration; it seems as if the fuller meaning of His approaching exodus was now revealed to Jesus Himself, and looking beyond the incident of death Jesus knew that He would die to live again in the splendour of a permanent Transfiguration. It is at least open to conjecture that at this time Jesus first perceived that the Sacrifice He had resolved to make was more than martyrdom; that it was, as St. Paul afterwards declared, a propitiatory death. Just as at His baptism in His vicarious confession and penitence, Jesus had received a "Divine investiture" for His preparatory ministry, now at the great turning-point of His life the Heavenly Father girded His Son afresh for fiercer conflicts and greater triumphs.

8. When the disciples perceived Moses and Elias departing, Peter exclaimed, "Rabbi, it is beautiful (*καλον*) to be here. Now let us make three booths, one for Thee and one for Moses and one for Elijah." St. Luke says "he did not know what he was saying"; while St. Mark describes him as answering blindly through fear. How inherently true to character, and indirectly an evidence of veracity, is this incidental touch in this narrative of mystery! It was not the first or last time that Simon's speech outstripped his understanding. Was he, we wonder, crudely imagining that this Mount should become a new Sinai, whence Jesus should issue fresh laws for the Messianic Kingdom? But even as he spoke, a luminous cloud overshadowed them, and a voice was heard, "This is My chosen Son: hear Him." The phrase "My Chosen" was redolent with memories of the Servant of Jehovah—the prophet, martyr and deliverer predestined to minister universal hope for humanity.<sup>2</sup> The light-filled cloud may have been one of the moving mists playing on Hermon's snow-capped heights and shot through with the glory of Jesus; or it may have been, as some imagine, the Shekinah-cloud of the Old Covenant appearing again. The voice may have been as the roll of thunder, or as a whisper of the Spirit; to the hearers

<sup>1</sup>Luke ix. 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup>Isa. xlii. 12.

it was intelligible as a preternatural testimony of the Sonship of Jesus and of the approval of the Heavenly Father; its reverberations sounded on through all their lives. For the lonely Jesus it was a moment of ecstasy and glory; although rejected by the Jews, the dark hour was illumined by this foretaste of coming triumph and the immediate assurance of Divine approval. His humiliation was touched with exultancy; His sorrow was transfigured by the testimony of the Father. Through the coming months of darkness and trouble, this Divine witness of His acceptance could never be forgotten; by it He would be encouraged and strengthened for the Cross. And for the disciples there had rung out an unmistakable Divine imperative; to the Christ they should listen and offer obedience. They were affrighted and fell on their faces; but Jesus coming to them, touched them and said, "Arise, and be not afraid"; "and lifting up their eyes they saw no one save Jesus only."

9. As they were descending the Mountain in the morning, Jesus sealed their lips, saying, "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen from the dead." Again the mysterious words about "rising from the dead" dashed their incipient hopes and vague imaginings to the ground; for already they had begun to dream of conquests and not of the Cross. Upon receiving this prohibition against any premature divulgence of the vision, they discussed among themselves the grave implications of the Master's speech, and then turned to ply Him with questions about His Messiahship and the predicted advent of Elias. Had this been a fictitious narrative, surely Jesus would have been made to point to the visitation on the Mount as the fulfilment of Elijah's anticipated coming; but, instead of this, the oracle is applied to John the Baptist. "Elias indeed cometh first and restoreth all things! But I say unto you Elias is already come, and they did not recognize him, but did unto him whatever they willed. So shall the Son of Man also suffer from them." These words show that the Glory of the Mount had not dimmed the Master's foresight of His coming doom. Herod's murder of John showed the spirit of the age; men still thirsted for the blood of God's Servants. In His baptism Jesus had entered into the oneness of humanity, and had taken up the race-burden of guilt; and now He would fain share with His brethren the Father's approval of the Son of Man, and for this desired

participation of men in His own filial experience He dedicated Himself even unto death. And the hour of His most utter self-renunciation and of His mental acceptance of the Cross, was the culmination of the Glory of His Divine Sonship. In the crisis of His self-dedication He was met by a new theophany, in which the steps of His Passion were lighted up with a full revelation of the Father's purpose, and as He felt the glow and gladness of this infusion of Divine Grace He was transformed in the ecstasy. Thus we think of Him on the dark background of history, transfigured by His holy enthusiasm for righteousness, by His unfaltering obedience to the Will of the Heavenly Father, and by His self-sacrificing love for the world.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DISCIPLES OF THE MESSIAH

I. BIOGRAPHY leads the reader through scenes fully as varied as those surveyed by travellers in Europe and Asia; there are heights of commanding impressiveness and lowlands with alternate fertility and sterility; we pass mountains and steppes, great torrents and placid streams. Even the life of Jesus is characterized by alternations such as these; there are great moments and crises followed by weeks crowded indeed with incidents, but incidents of a less determinative influence in shaping the course of things. Accepting tentatively our proposed chronology of events, we have the impression of having crossed a lofty mountain-range; from the Raising of Lazarus to the Transfiguration we have passed from height to height; the events have been all charged with passionate living and tragic consequences; and Jesus has appeared to us, not as a passive dreamer, but as a mighty Actor in the drama of history—spiritual in His aims, delivering His soul of great thoughts and noble ethics, but also wielding a potent dynamical influence within the circumscribed limits of His Ministry. Utterly delusive are all those descriptions of Jesus which give the impression that He was only a gentle, poetic visionary; fuller recognition of the balanced conception of His life presented in the Gospels enables us to perceive that, while He was deeply sympathetic and could weep for human suffering, He was also strenuously revolutionary, awing men by the terror of His frown, and hurling the thunderbolts of angry scorn at all hypocrisy and inhumanity. But now we are to descend from the heights of crucial and climactic experiences, that we may review the passage of events on the common levels of Christ's Ministry; and for this purpose we shall group a series<sup>1</sup> of related incidents which show to us once again that the emphasis of His teaching fell upon the centrality and dominance of His own Person. Our unprejudiced study of the Gospels has resulted not only in an irre-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. viii. 19-22; xvii. 2-xviii. 35; xix. 13-30; Mark ix. 33-x. 31; Luke ix. 46-48, 57-62; xviii. 18-30.



sistible return from the extreme negative position of early hostile criticism to a belief that these books are substantially trustworthy, but it has also helped to focus attention upon the ultimate mystery of the Person they describe. Tremendous as may be the importance of the ethical teaching of Jesus, still the one unsurpassable thing in the Gospels is the historical character of the Master Himself. Professor H. M. Gwatkin boldly says, "The firmest Christian must allow that Jesus of Nazareth added nothing to Micah's summary of human duty—except, he will say, power to act on it."<sup>1</sup> We have already found that under the influence of His instruction two movements of thought had been followed by the disciples: gradually they had been forced to see that He was not a Messiah after the manner of popular Jewish hopes; on the other hand they had been slowly convinced that all the prophetic hopes of the Old Testament converged upon Him as the Spiritual Messiah of the whole human race.

2. It is a tribute to the triumph of His personal influence that, while Jesus abnegated all political functions of an external reign, He yet secured the loyal adhesion of the disciples to His real Messiahship. He shattered the material dream of His nation by accentuation of the supreme importance of the ethical and inward life; and yet He claimed the national title, breathing into it a universal meaning. This being clear, it remains to examine next what He set before Himself and the disciples as the allotted task of the Messiah. Already we have reviewed His repeated, solemn declaration that it was necessary for Him to suffer and to be killed by Israel's legal representatives; but the prediction of His own Resurrection and His grateful acceptance of Simon's confession that He was no other than the Messiah, force us to conclude that He did not regard death as the end either of His person or of His cause. The first message of Jesus had concerned the advent of the Reign of God; in this, He conceived, would be realized the purpose of the Heavenly Father. He soon found, however, that the Divine *prothesis* had to be wrought out amid the cross-currents of perverse human wills. He was so keenly disappointed at Jerusalem's rejection of a great opportunity for spiritual reconstruction, and openly lamented His failure to impress the city by His Personality; we cannot but wonder what course the evolution of Redemption would have

<sup>1</sup> *The Knowledge of God*, vol. ii., p. 43.

followed had the Holy City received Him as its spiritual king. But the tide of Divine Purpose could not be driven back by the opposition of men; it was bound to advance, and if diverted from its original channels it would flow in wherever it might and create for itself new currents in history. Reflected clearly in the Gospels we find the graduated steps of Jesus in preparing a band of disciples who should form a new Spiritual fellowship, and He promised to commit unto them the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. But this presentation of the purpose of Jesus has been severely criticized. Some writers with a strong naturalistic bias have made out that it was impossible that Jesus should speak beforehand of His Resurrection; while others, without questioning the Church's faith in our Lord, have questioned or denied the possibility of His having designed any establishment of an organized society of His followers. Thus the Rev. James H. F. Peile, in his *Bampton Lectures*, says: "When we inquire whether Jesus contemplated the founding of what we mean by a Christian Church, we must honestly admit that there is nothing to prove it in His extant discourses; nor are we called upon to believe that after His Resurrection He revealed, to His apostles, in discourses which have not been handed down to us, the details of the organization by which the Gospel was to be spread and maintained in the world. He appears to have been content with the Jewish Church, in which He was born, as a framework for Spiritual Religion. The author of the conception of the Church, as we know it, was, humanly speaking, not Jesus but Paul."<sup>1</sup> This cautiously expressed opinion cannot be met by a categorical denial, since so much can be said in support of it; we can only meet it with a question as to what Jesus designed His disciples to be and to do, if they were not to constitute a new fellowship. After leading them to the confession of His Spiritual Messiahship and seeking to prepare them for His death, did He not woo their allegiance and strive to ensure their continuance as disciples? As we have pointed out before, a close study of His Ministry discloses far more of plan and foresight than some imagine. It is not to the point to say Jesus did not intend a politico-ecclesiastical organization, such as the Church subsequently became; He at least intended that His disciples should begin the realization of God's Kingdom, and for this end it was needful that they should constitute a spiritual society.

<sup>1</sup> *The Reproach of the Gospel*, 1907, p. 140.

As He journeyed from the Mount of Transfiguration back into Galilee, it was this aim that dominated His mind, appearing even in incidents which tended to frustrate His efforts to breathe His own purpose into the souls of His disciples.

3. On the day following the Transfiguration, before ever Jesus could rejoin the other nine disciples, they were subjected to a test which humiliated them with a sense of impotence and failure. The transition from the apocalypse of mountain glory to an exhibition of passionate misery in the valley is so sudden that we are not sure whether the juxtaposition of such contrasting scenes is due to art or to chronology. In the Mission of the Twelve the evangelists had apparently exercised miraculous powers of healing and of exorcism; and now, when they were besought to restore an afflicted boy to health, they were unable to do so. A number of scribes had followed Jesus northward with the father of the demoniac boy, and when they witnessed the ineffectualness of the disciples' faith they began to dispute about the authority of their Master Himself. Suddenly Jesus was seen approaching, and whether it was the coincidence of His arrival with the controversy about Him, or that something of the majesty of His Transfiguration still lingered about His person, "immediately all the people seeing Him were utterly amazed." The poet Virgil noted that "often when a tumult has arisen, and the low rabble rages in excitement, . . . then if they, perchance, see a man dignified by piety and services, they are silent, and stand with ears pricked up while he sways their souls with words and soothes their passions."<sup>1</sup> Jesus spoke an enigmatic, sad rebuke: "O faithless generation! how long shall I be with you?"<sup>2</sup> He was still intently brooding upon His approaching *exodus*, and wounded by the faithlessness alike of the disciples and of the crowd. He demanded a certain spiritual susceptibility and loyalty in men so closely connected with Him. His double-edged rebuke cut also across the perversity of the scribes, who in their materialism sought only for an outward sign. The father of the boy alone appears to be thinking of the sufferer, and with a touch of pardonable impatience exclaims, "If Thou canst do anything, pity and help us!" As to the phrase, "if Thou canst," said Jesus, "all things are possible to him that believeth." With pathetic

<sup>1</sup> *The Æneid*, bk. i.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ix. 19, *πρὸς ἑμᾶς, in relations with you.*

entreaty the father answered, "I believe: help me (even) in my unbelief." Jesus had no wish to begin again the exciting and ineffectual scenes of His healing wonders, but His compassion was stirred, and seeing the increasing crowds running toward Him, He hastened to speak the word of power which restored the boy. Once again the Evangelist represents this triumph of faith as the rebuke of the unclean spirit. At present we treat the demonology of New Testament diseases as but a part of the framework of the Gospel narratives; if ever we are able again to accept the hypothesis of "possession" as psychologically true, new point and definiteness will be found in our Lord's conflict with the world of evil. St. Luke remarks upon the popular astonishment at this demonstration of the majesty of God. The enthusiasm for Jesus which had died down was fanned again just as a smouldering coal bursts into flame at a passing breath of wind.

4. Jesus shrank from anything like a renewal of popularity, and, desiring to continue His private instruction of the Twelve, He travelled south as quietly as possible, purposely avoiding the more frequented thoroughfares. This journey served again to show the utter disparity between the anticipations of Jesus and the ambitions of His disciples. "For He was teaching His disciples and saying to them that the Son of Man is delivered into men's hands and they shall kill Him, and when He is killed, after three days He shall rise again." Reading in their faces the gloomy perplexity occasioned by His prediction, Jesus solemnly enjoined His disciples to "lay up these words in your ears." In each repetition of this "word of doom," we trace a graduated advance in the revelation of His Passion. He had already spoken of its necessity, and now He adds the fatal affirmation that "the Son of Man is delivered into men's hands."<sup>1</sup> Was He referring to the treachery of Judas already divined, or to the unfolding steps of His Father's purpose? However rigidly historical our examination of the Ministry of Jesus, it seems impossible to foreclose all theological interpretations of His sacrifice as we follow His steps to the Cross. The oppressive sense of swift-coming doom in the language of Jesus corroborates our supposition that the rulers had made their plans before He had made the excursion to the north of Palestine. The utter mystification of the

<sup>1</sup> Mark ix. 31, pres. indic.



disciples is reflected in the Evangelist's language: "they understood not this saying, and it was something veiled from them, insomuch that they perceived it not; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying."<sup>1</sup> The alienation of the disciples from their Lord must be a real reminiscence, for no writer would ever dream of inventing an experience which seems damaging to the claims of Jesus and injurious to the reputation of the apostles. We touch an actual memory of a bewilderment which tended to pass into antagonism to such vaticinations of their Rabbi. It is far from impossible, also, that the disciples were secretly and treacherously encouraged by the Pharisees to fall back upon the popular belief in a materialistic, political Messianism. These perplexed men thought that when Jesus openly declared Himself to be the Christ and undertook the Messianic rôle of "the restitution of all things," the rulers and the people would be won to espouse His cause, and all His dreary fears of doom would evaporate as mists before the rising sun. Meanwhile a suspicion that the Master was the victim of a painful hallucination undermined their confidence; "they were afraid to ask Him about this saying"—afraid to provoke Him again to rebuke them as He had done when Simon had uttered his remonstrance. They walked apart from Him and talked in subdued voices of the future, encouraging one another in the hope that a brighter day would soon come, when their Master would shake Himself free from His gloom. If Jesus had wished that the nine disciples should remain in ignorance of His recent Transfiguration—which is a matter of uncertainty—it was inevitable that broken and whispered hints of that apocalypse should fall from the favoured three; but while they kindled afresh the hopes of ultimate triumph, they also aroused rivalries in hearts whose worldliness seemed invincible. Thus, as they conversed, the natural joy of comradeship gave place to mutual jealousies and fears lest justice might not be done to them in the future restoration of the Kingdom. Instead of meekness, love and a desire to prefer one another, these old-time disciples were as keen as their modern successors upon making selfishness the supremely efficient factor; they still eagerly sought after a secular gospel. Their attempts at restraint at times broke down, and the whispered bickerings gave way to loud and angry reproaches, so that as Jesus looked back at them He perceived their quarrelsome mood and felt an ac-

<sup>1</sup> Mark ix. 32.



centuation of their estrangement from Himself. He saw, with poignant distress, that all His teaching had failed to effect any radical change in their hearts; still, in their loyalty to their misunderstood Lord, He found a pledge that they would even yet become ambassadors for God, able to continue the work He had begun.

5. As soon as they reached Capernaum, however, their thoughts were diverted to other claims and problems by a question put by some officials to Simon as to whether Jesus would pay a certain tax.<sup>1</sup> The contrast between the present conditions of social and political life and those which existed in the time of Jesus creates a little difficulty in understanding the attitude of the Master to the state. It is sometimes said that Jesus was a revolutionary, a democrat, or a social reformer; but such names, while they express a part of the truth, convey quite a wrong conception of the rôle that Jesus played in history. As a matter of fact, this Syrian Jew possessed no political power, and He discouraged the popular Messianism which craved for it; He was all but indifferent to the external framework of the state, and accepted the government of the time, both Roman and Jewish, without any expressed wish to overthrow it. On the surface of it, this indifference of Jesus to the state appears to Englishmen a radical defect; but upon investigation, we discover that any other attitude on the part of Jesus would have doomed His movement to certain failure. He gave no easily applied rules that we can apply to our modern social and political problems; His teaching dealt with the inmost principles and motives of all human conduct. His individualism created a real universalism; His indifference to temporary phases of government allowed Him to be the abiding Lord of history. Jesus imparted a spirit to the world which creates an insatiable craving for reform, and also makes possible the accomplishment of every projected advance in civilization. To return to the incident at Capernaum, we perceive that, notwithstanding an exalted self-consciousness as the Messiah, He was quite willing to submit to the usual demands of government. It may have been the capitation-tax which Augustus had imposed upon the Jews, or more probably it was the temple didrachm.<sup>2</sup> If this were the customary

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvii. 24-27.

<sup>2</sup> About one shilling and three pence.

time for collecting the temple-tax, in the month of Adar (February-March), then Jesus had only about another five weeks to live, although it is possible that the *Shelihim* were demanding the tax left unpaid at some previous time, which was long over-due. While Jesus used the occasion for teaching His disciples submission to civic and religious authorities, He paradoxically used it also for the reiteration of His personal claim to be the Son of God. "What think you, Simon: from whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute, from their sons or from strangers?" "From strangers," replied the disciple. "Then the sons at least are free," said Jesus. Still, while He emphasizes His mysterious superiority to the temple, He claims no exemption from the tax, but directs His disciple to pay it. The reputed miracle of catching the fish with a stater in its mouth reads like a proverbial saying, taken too prosaically by a later generation. The only deduction to be made from it is that the funds of Jesus were exhausted, and that Simon had to resort to his fisherman's net in order to meet the need. The incident affords a touching illustration of the poverty of Jesus, and reminds us that throughout His Ministry He was dependent on the benevolence and hospitality of friends—of good women, who followed Him, and of strangers. Jesus was as indifferent to money as He was to government; wealth to Him seemed a matter of unimportance, save that it often constituted a grave moral danger. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven." Christ's teaching about riches shows that though less prevalent, perhaps, than today, mammon-worship was even then a powerful influence in human relationships. The disciples, although for the most part poor men, evinced by their disputes about their rights and positions in the Kingdom of the Messiah a susceptibility to the glamour of wealth and power; hence it may be inferred that they would never have attributed poverty to their Lord, had it not been an indisputable, actual characteristic of His Ministry. And this note of poverty, although free from the features of degradation which accompany it in our times, makes it more amazing that men should confess belief in His Messiahship. What a tremendous personal power Jesus must have wielded over the minds of His disciples, in order to revolutionize all their conventional opinions of life and greatness, so that though intimately acquainted with His human poverty, they were led at last to reverence Him as Divine!

6. Coming into "the house" of His abode in Capernaum,<sup>1</sup> Jesus suddenly confused and shamed His disciples by inquiring what they had disputed about along the way. At least, it seems more probable that Jesus should ask this than that the disciples should broach the subject, as St. Matthew records. Though at first abashed, one of the Twelve presently said, "Who is the greatest (in the Kingdom of Heaven)?" The repeated recurrence of this dream of a political revival in Israel among the disciples themselves, even after Jesus had reiterated the prophecy of His passion and death, only shows the stubborn tenacity and fanatical materialism against which He struggled throughout His Ministry. From the moment that they had first followed Him, Jesus had consistently taught that God's Reign belongs to the inward life of man; that all its outward manifestations must spring from the surrender of the will to a Divine Purpose, and this common obedience will bind men in a fellowship of fraternal love. Life itself is greater than its external conditions; true greatness must be the magnitude of rendered service. While the answer of Jesus is variously reported, the reminiscence of the scene that followed is too intrinsically harmonious with His known character to be obscured. Jesus took a little child and placed him in the midst of those ambitious men. St. Mark states that He clasped the little one in His arms. "I tell you truly," He said, "unless you turn and become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoso then shall humble himself like this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The qualities of the child commended by Him are those which lie on the surface—trustfulness, willingness to forgive, ready inclination to help others, and the grace of perfect naturalness. These are certainly not the characteristics emulated by the ordinary man. "We must be singularly different from the common race of men, or singularly dull," says a Bampton Lecturer,<sup>2</sup> "if we do not realize that our actions and thoughts are governed by a jealous sense of property—a relentless insistence on personal rights and personal dignity, which are injurious alike to our own moral development, and to our usefulness as members of a society." With this child nestling in His arms, Jesus rebuked the hardness, egoism and jealousy of the disciples. "In antiquity the virtues that were most

<sup>1</sup> Mark ix. 33.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. F. Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 102.

admired were almost exclusively those which are distinctively masculine. Courage, self-assertion, magnanimity, and, above all, patriotism, were the leading features of the ideal type; and chastity, modesty and charity, the gentler and the domestic virtues, which are especially feminine, were greatly undervalued."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus taught the paradoxes of Christianity:—weakness is sometimes stronger than might; outward shame nobly borne becomes true glory; the bondage of God's service is a nobler emancipation of the will than any political freedom can impart; by dying to the lower self man is regenerated from above. Having given the ideal and type of discipleship, Jesus began to inculcate gentleness toward children and identified their cause with Himself: "He who receives a little child like this in My name receives Me, and he who receives Me, receives not Me but Him that sent Me"—a characteristic saying blending the inimitable dignity with the gracious humility of Jesus. This Teacher takes up the cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice, taught before by the sages of Greece, and breathes into them a sweet reasonableness of love; He adopts the five great principles of Confucian ethics—benevolence, rectitude, propriety, knowledge and sincerity, infusing into them a new childlike simplicity and the warm glow of inward life. But while we emphasize the teachings of Jesus, we recognize that His direct aim was not to present a balanced system of morals, but to transform the temper of His disciples, that they might be minded to deny themselves and take up the Cross.

7. John listened to this doctrine with a troubled conscience, recalling with a feeling of consternation an occurrence in which the disciples had played anything but a childlike part. Although he was a "Son of Thunder," John was more than ordinarily susceptible to the higher teaching of Jesus, and evinced a teachableness that endeared him to the Master. He was less impetuous than Simon, but still of a fiery temper; and yet in this very confession of his fault may be traced the beginnings of an utter transformation of character. The incident John referred to probably occurred while they were engaged on the mission in Galilee, some months before.<sup>2</sup> One day they had seen a

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ix. 38ff.



stranger casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and they had imperiously forbidden the unknown exorcist to use their Master's name. Such a phenomenon serves to show how wide and deep an impression Jesus had made in spite of all opposition. John's prohibition may have sprung from a disciple's jealousy of a spiritual prerogative rather than from zeal for his Lord's honour. In reply, Jesus laid down the rule by which men may be tested, "He who is not against us is for us." It recalls, however, another occasion when this rule was stated in a reverse and more rigorous form, "Whoever is not with Me is against Me; and whoever gathers not with Me, is scattering." But this latter had been spoken in regard to men openly hostile to Jesus, who attempted to turn popular rejoicing at a beneficent healing miracle into a blasphemous suspicion that Jesus had wrought the cure of the dumb man by the aid of the devil—"by Beelzebub He casteth out devils." This was no intellectual errancy, but rather the perversion of conscience, and for this sin of inward antagonism to Jesus, which never hesitated to call His goodness evil, there was no hope. On the other hand, there ought to be a tolerance for all merely external disagreements, and every encouragement must be given to the incipient faith of the ignorant. Faith may begin in a blind, confused feeling of confidence in Christ's goodness and power, but it will grow to dauntless heroism in His Service. The unknown exorcist may have used the name of Jesus ignorantly as a magic spell, but it was not likely that he would quickly turn against One whose name he revered.

8. St. Matthew represents the conversation of that day as ending when Jesus enunciated the principles of His new community, but St. Mark makes it terminate with an uncompromising demand for loyalty in His disciples even unto death. They were to be salted with fire in the tragic events which were at hand, and Jesus pleads with them to "be at peace with one another." The successive stages of the journey from Cæsarea Philippi to Capernaum had given the Master opportunities for renewing His teaching about the Kingdom of God and the character of its members. He had so far succeeded that, while He had contradicted all the popular notions of the Coming One, yet His disciples were impelled to confess that He was no other than the true Messiah. After this confession, however, the



special task of Jesus was to assimilate the disciples to His own moral type: hence, He calls upon them to renounce all selfishness and take up the Cross. They were not to imitate the haughty pride and jealousies of the scribes and Pharisees, but were to become childlike in heart, so that the Divine Spirit might rule their thoughts, emotions and wills. Jesus had given them a new conception of God through which they were to interpret His Kingdom. By example He taught them, showing Himself to be willing to forego His own rights, and, although a Son, to pay tribute as a slave. The transformation of the disciples depended upon a full-hearted loyalty to Himself; by their love for Jesus those men might practise the perfect ethic of the Kingdom of God. No careful adjustments of outward restraints and nice artifices of deportment could help them very much; the life Jesus demanded was to be characterized by the spontaneity, freshness and grace of childhood: "I tell you truly, unless you turn and become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

## CHAPTER III

### THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH

I. It is in every way credible that, at this period when Jesus was dedicating Himself to an act of sublime sacrifice, His own thoughts and purposes should break forth like a long-suppressed fire into the intensity and luminousness of a self-revealing flame. Jesus designed the institution of a Church, and discoursed, it may be, while the child remained in the midst of the disciples, concerning the constitution and inward rule of this New Society. But since sober and devout scholars have doubted if Jesus ever conceived of the existence of the Christian Church as a distinct community separate from Judaism, it may be taken for granted that the subject of His teaching about the Church is involved in perplexity. On two occasions only is the term "church"<sup>1</sup> reported to have been spoken by Jesus; and since, of the four evangelists, only one attributes this word to the Master, doubt has arisen concerning it. Again, it is said that the vivid impression made by Jesus upon the minds of His disciples that He would come again speedily to sum up all things, precludes the belief that He planned a distinct organization of His followers into a community. The upspringing of such doubts brings no disproof that Jesus said to Simon, "On this rock I will build My Church." Our foregoing study of His Ministry has convinced us that Jesus was no futile dreamer, but that He was a powerful Leader of men—the self-conscious Founder of a new Spiritual Community in the world. However immense the contribution of St. Paul to Christianity, the idea of the Church was not due to him, but to Christ. That He did not plan the actual ecclesiastical organizations which exist today, does not prove that He contemplated no future for His disciples, and gave no rules for the new fellowship. The Reign of the Heavenly Father, which was the fundamental idea in Christ's mind, could be realized only through a community historically conditioned. While it is correct to think of this Kingdom as spiritual and subjective—as "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17, *ἐκκλησία*.

Ghost"—it is also equally true, that Jesus Himself set forth the establishment of this Kingdom as a concrete, organic reality, small indeed in its beginnings, but destined to attain to vast dimensions as a spiritual society. The conception of a Church was not a strange thought in Israel. The history of God's Revelation to His people had created the idea of an *ecclesia* which combined the ideal and the empirical aspects of the Divine Kingdom—that is, of a Church separate from the nation, and composed of a "remnant" of spiritual people bound together by the covenant of Jehovah. This historic fact is itself a refutation of the supposition that it was inherently impossible for Jesus to conceive of a Church separate from the Jewish nation. He who sought to conserve the continuity of Revelation might most naturally adopt an idea so well adapted to the results of His own ministry. And in the later stages of His career Jesus sought to breathe into His disciples a definite consciousness of fellowship, to promote the *esprit de corps* of an ecclesia. Until this time, these disciples were simply a group of men attached to Jesus and persuaded that He was the Messiah; but now the Master set Himself to mould this common affection for Himself into a mutual bond among them. He inspires them with a definite consciousness of unity, so that they already constituted the beginning of His Church in the world. Their obsession by ideas of the august splendour of a Davidic, national revival really menaced the society of Jesus: hence He unremittingly sought to supplant this politico-ethical dream by His own conception of spiritual triumph to be won through passion and sacrifice. Jesus was encouraged by the fact that they had survived the first shock of disappointment, and had continued loyally to serve Him as disciples, when all the representative leaders of the nation had openly rejected Him. Having, then, so effectually taught His disciples the lesson of humility through the child, Jesus began to show the nature of the fellowship that He was creating.

2. The general thought of our time wavers in uncertainty as to whether emphasis must be laid upon the socialism of Jesus, or upon His individualism: in His teaching the pendulum swings from the one side to the other with a regularity that has baffled many.<sup>1</sup> However, that men can read the Gospels and still

<sup>1</sup>Admirably treated in *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

hesitate concerning this, is itself evidence that the socialism and the individualism are both present, and that there is no real contradiction between them. The claims of Jesus to be the Son of Man, to be the Resurrection and the Life, to be the Succourer of all who feel spiritual needs, imply in their profound mysticism the underlying unity of the race, and also that the racial life is organically summed up in Him. The mysticism we generally attribute to St. Paul is latent in the teaching of Jesus. The Christ will not be historically complete until all individuals of the race are integrated in His Body. No one ever felt the unity of the race more profoundly and persistently than did Jesus of Nazareth. Nevertheless, the society of Jesus could only be constituted by spiritually renewed individuals. His words about "one of these little ones" reveal a deep personal feeling, which enabled Him to sweep aside all the mere accidents of wealth and rank, and to think alone of every man as a human soul. The whole teaching of Jesus is pervaded by the thought of God's ineffable grace toward every erring son of man. The Good Shepherd leaves the ninety and nine of His flock safely folded, and goes to seek the one strayed sheep. It is He, and not the silly wanderer, who feels most deeply its loss; and in its recovery, He has keener joy than the safety of all the others had given Him. It is not the Father's will that one of these "little ones" should perish. Jesus knew that Messiah's mission was to accomplish this Divine purpose of salvation. The "fold" into which this Shepherd King would bring men is the Kingdom of God. This very attempt to penetrate the thought of this strong, beautiful individualism swings the mind back again to renewed emphasis upon the community; for as the Divine Regnancy is acknowledged, men are filled with a fraternal sentiment for their fellows. Jesus is Himself the Rock upon which this fellowship must be established; love to Him is the bond between all its members. "For," said He, "where two or three are gathered together in *My name*, there am I in the midst of them." There is a marvellous modernity in this phase of His teaching; and we are learning afresh that the only true Socialism must depend upon thoroughgoing Christian individualism. Such individual allegiance to Christ can work out only in social ethics, and will give brotherhood in place of mutual animosities, coöperation for competition, and altruism instead of selfishness.

3. Jesus did not hesitate to place His cause in the hands of men who were loyally attached to Himself. Were we to contemplate these apostles only after the Ascension, we should indeed perceive the results of their training in the School of Jesus, by which they were prepared for the equipment of the Holy Spirit, but we should miss the lessons of the time of their uncertainty and spiritual immaturity. They were not great men in the ordinary sense; they were representative of the common man, possessing neither wealth nor learning, but they were qualified for discipleship by their genuine desire for goodness and truth. With one exception, they maintained a strict moral integrity, and, guided by the simple principle of faith in Jesus, they escaped the intrigues of professional religionists and defied opposition. We see them as they really were; for although St. Luke sometimes omits or softens down their occasional blunders, they are not idealized, but are portrayed with realistic veracity. At first their characters were marred by touches of worldliness and selfish ambition; they were often culpably stupid or slow of understanding, and all too little appreciative of the Master's spiritual aims: still, in spite of these inevitable defects, they cherished a generous enthusiasm for Jesus, which saved them from ignoble apostasy, and afforded inspiration for service in His Kingdom. It may be that their intellectual and spiritual limitations—for they were men of narrow outlook and devoid of philosophical tendencies—were a qualification for transmitting without substantial change the evangelic deposit committed to them. In Jesus they came to find the Word of Life, and as sowers they went forth scattering this truth-seed into the furrows of the world; and the harvest resulting from their labours is the Christian Church.

4. In instituting the apostolate of this Fellowship, Jesus exercised a searching discrimination of character, together with a sure prevision of the work they were to do. According to St. Luke, He found seventy besides the Twelve who were willing to act as His heralds of the New Kingdom; and alongside the immediate purpose of evangelism in their mission, Jesus planned a training of these witnesses for a broader propaganda in the future. While He earnestly desired to build His Church on the rock-character of a faith-confession of His Messiahship, He did not accept every volunteer, but demanded from the can-



didate some touch of spiritual heroism. Had we forejudged His movement without the data of the Gospel narrations, we might have surmised that His chosen agents would have been men of learning and rank; but history corrects such a presupposition, showing the professional class of scribes to have been coldly formal, not only insusceptible to the moral idealism of Jesus, but bitterly opposed in temper and aims. Both foresight and necessity threw Jesus back in trust upon the ordinary people; the Chosen Twelve were common men, fishermen and peasants. However, even among the scribes there were some bright exceptions; and one of this nobler sort having listened to the unconventional, profound teaching of the Master, was caught in a wave of enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> "Lord," he exclaimed impulsively, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." One writer judges the young man's offer somewhat morosely. "In the man's flaring enthusiasm Jesus saw the smoke of egotistical self-deceit"; but we ought not to reproach him for a recognition of Jesus' inherent greatness, which meant at least a temporary renunciation of class prejudice. Jesus pointed to the penury and hardship involved in such discipleship: "The foxes have dens, and the birds of the air resting-places, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." This was virtually saying to him, "You are looking for a political Messiah, but I am only a poor man; you demand the privileges of a caste, but I offer only the reward of a good conscience." To follow the Son of Man was to court the odium of schism, and to strip himself of the pride of his religious order, and the man, with all his good impulses, could not rise to the moral level of Christ's heroic test.

5. A contrast to this impetuous volunteer is given in the case of the man whom Jesus called, and who made filial piety a pretext for his refusal. "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father," an oriental way of saying that until his father died his first duty was with him. Dr. A. Plummer thinks that the man's father was *in extremis*, or had just died, since to put off Jesus indefinitely would have been unworthy trifling. But more familiarity with Eastern modes of thought and speech would diminish all sense of strangeness in this man's excuse. Ordinarily, the voice of God comes to us through the relationships and affections of family life, and only in cases of extraordinary

<sup>1</sup> Matt. viii. 19-22; Luke ix. 57-60.

election to some solemn office does the Divine imperative clash with common duties.<sup>1</sup> The answer of Jesus implies that the man had come to a moral crisis in his life, and that his special peril lay in the engrossing interests of social and family ties. He was thinking simply of the death of the body; but far more to be dreaded is the moral death of the soul, in which experience man's higher nature is degraded, and affections designed for God are often changed into guilty lusts. Then there is still another kind of death—one to be desired; and this results from renunciation of the world—a death to all that is base and evil; for this is dying to live. "As for thee, let the dead bury their dead, put aside all subordinate calls then, and come, follow Me."

It is always of interest to observe the reproduction of the thoughts of Jesus in our modern writers; and at this point many will recall Hegel, of whom Professor E. Caird has written, "To him, therefore, the great aphorism, in which the Christian ethics and theology may be said to be summed up, that 'he that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall save it,' is no mere epigrammatic saying, whose self-contradiction is not to be regarded too closely; it is rather the first distinct, though as yet undeveloped, expression of the exact truth as to the nature of Spirit."<sup>2</sup> Again, "What Christianity teaches is only that the law of the life of the Spirit—the law of self-realization through self-abnegation—holds good for God as for man, and, indeed, that the spirit that works in man to 'die to live' is the Spirit of God." "Nor can this be a merely *natural* process—i.e. a process in which the opposition melts away without being heard of. Rather it is a process which begins with a distinct consciousness of independence to be renounced, of opposition to be overcome, and which involves, therefore, an 'explicit surrender'—a conscious reconciliation of the opposition." The "explicit surrender," however, cannot be made to an abstract idea; only to the Messiah or King of the conscience, will the soul bow in fealty. Christ demanded not only a detachment from the world, but also an attachment to Himself. We have dwelt upon this philosophical exposition of the law of sacrifice at this point because it describes, in the language of the twentieth century, the constitutive ethic of the Christian Church.

<sup>1</sup> One commentator quotes Augustine: "Amandus est generator, sed præponendus est Creator."

<sup>2</sup> Professor E. Caird's *Hegel*, pp. 212, 218.

6. A third example of Christ's rigorous exclusion from the apostolate of all double-minded and unreliable candidates is recorded by St. Luke—from the *apostolate*, not from the ecclesia or kingdom. It is a mischievous confusion to assume that He intended every man to become an apostle; all men are called to enter the Kingdom, but only a comparatively small number was elected to the apostolate. This third candidate for discipleship was like the first we have described, in that he offered himself, and like the second, he desired to delay on account of duty to his friends. "I will follow thee, Lord, but first let me bid farewell to them that are at my house." The wish to bid good-bye impresses us as an amiable and natural sentiment; but Jesus divined some flaw in the man's resolution, and warned him against double-mindedness. "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is well fitted for the kingdom of God." "He who cares for his work," said an ancient writer,<sup>1</sup> "and would plough straight furrows must no more look wistfully after his comrades, but must put his soul into his task." Jesus had the gift, which has belonged to most leaders, of reading character; He knew what was in man. He strove to repress rash enthusiasm, to brace up the hesitating man to effective resolution, to draw the divided mind into unity with the Divine Will. A parallel to this treatment of men is found in the *Analects* of China; Confucius met the rash boldness of his most energetic disciple with the sobering counsel that he should first consult with his father and elder brother, while he urged a slower and more timorous pupil to carry out his teaching at once.<sup>2</sup> High purposes demand the whole-hearted service of those who execute them.

7. The Divine election of a man to this apostolate of the Messianic Kingdom was "an election to the Cross and to the cry, 'Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthani.'" Jesus was calling men to share His own Divine Mission; but only those who were dedicated to the loyalty of belief in His Messiahship were fitted for such a work. The claim of Jesus upon the apostles was absolute; He could brook no rivals; they were called to give Him the supreme place in their hearts, and for His sake they were to be ready to suffer and die. "There is no absolute death, but in all death the means of a higher life." We must die to live.

<sup>1</sup> Hesiod, *Works and Days*, Op. 443.

<sup>2</sup> *Analects*, bk. xi, ch. xxi.

And those men who responded to His call shared in the conscious dignity of His mission; they ultimately became His ambassadors, and were bound together into a corporate life forming a new *koinonia*. They failed, indeed, at first to appreciate His lofty aims, and so they could not in the beginning comprehend their own destiny; but after His Resurrection they were endowed with truer spiritual vision of the vocation into which the Master had led them. This group of disciples came at last to assimilate Christ's consciousness of God; they were drawn into organic union by the magnetic currents of His love, and were trained by Him for a world-wide mission. Philosophers and poets had dreamed of a golden age in a dim, half-forgotten antiquity, but Jesus took up the bold hope of the prophets of a glorious kingdom, yet to be realized.<sup>1</sup> Oriental sages had represented all things as moving in recurrent cycles; the Jewish prophets believed in a rectilinear movement toward a definite goal, and in their writings we find the beginnings of a sound philosophy of history.<sup>2</sup> Jesus definitely set out to fulfil the dreams of the inspired prophets and instituted the fellowship of His disciples as the beginnings of the Messianic Kingdom. Into this ecclesia He threw the fire of His love—a fire which transmutes the fuel it meets into its own substance; and from this love has sprung the creative energy of a new progress. The dynamic connection of man's uplift with the Person and teaching of Jesus is too apparent to be denied. The ecclesia, therefore, may be truly described as created by the enthusiasm of Jesus: for it He gave His life as a ransom. Within this community the law of life is the imitation of Himself in an inward and vital way. When we consider, therefore, the end Jesus had in view, we cease to wonder at His rigorous demand for moral heroism; His rejection of all who were lukewarm or vacillating is explicable, and His call for self-renunciation and appeal for passionate attachment to Himself are seen to have been inevitable. Jesus was preparing the Body of His perpetual incarnation—

<sup>1</sup> "I can hear a faint crow of the cock of fresh mornings, far, far, yet distinct." Meredith, *The Empty Purse*, p. 45.

"Then are there fresher mornings mounting East than ever yet have dawned." Meredith, *Poems and Lyrics*, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> "Prophecy is the philosophy of history. Prophecy is history become conscious,—history expressing its own meaning. But prophecy is not the philosophy of ordinary, but of Jewish history." A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 98.



beating out the instrument of His universal spiritual activity. And the self-consciousness of the Master in these graduated steps of His advancing mission can scarcely be denied by those who admit the Gospels as historical.

8. We have found frequent occasion to observe, in the course of this study of Christ's Ministry, that He sought to focus His ethical doctrines into one life-determining fealty to Himself. His explanations of this remarkable claim show that Jesus did not set Himself to be the substitute for God, but that He is the way to the Heavenly Father. Were we to ignore this relationship between Jesus and the Father Christianity would simply mean the recrudescence of idolatry; if He be not the way to God, then His religion resolves itself into man-worship. The claim of Jesus to be man's rightful Lord gives point and definiteness to the ethical teaching of our noblest modern philosophers that man can realize his true life only by self-surrender. This idea of Divine transcendence posits the only adequate authority capable of making the voice of conscience imperative and effectual. It involves a separation of God from man, indeed, but a separation which evolves into ethical reunion. Whether the life of Jesus justified this tremendous personal claim or not, can only be judged of by those who study to understand its facts and implications. Early in His Ministry He elected Twelve disciples, and at the time of their ordination He enunciated the ultimate principles of moral and religious life; and in doing so, He freely abandoned the letter of the Mosaic law for a triumphant explication of its inmost spirit. It has been said that "He appears to have been content with the Jewish Church, in which He was born, as a framework for Spiritual Religion";<sup>1</sup> and it is true that, after His Resurrection, the disciples piously observed the old forms of Judaism, as though the New Spirit could continue to express itself in the old conditions. When Jesus delivered His Mountain discourse, He may not have clearly foreseen the final severance of His society from Israel, since He then hoped that the nation would give due acknowledgement of His spiritual authority; but the experience of the subsequent months had brought about the breach between the national representatives and Himself, and He could not but see that the rejection of the Messiah made it inevitable that a complete severance would

<sup>1</sup> Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 140.



take place between His disciples and Judaism. It is thought by some that Jesus was too much prepossessed by the belief in His speedy Second Coming to give any thought to the external institutions of a Church; and yet it is indubitable that He Himself foretold that the new wine of His teaching would burst the old wineskins. To prevent, therefore, the disintegration and scattering of His disciples, Jesus sought to infuse into them the consciousness of an organic life, of which He was to be the abiding bond and inspiration.

9. The early parables of the mustard seed and the leaven show that Jesus did most certainly foresee the growth of His religious community, and in the later months of His Ministry the unconcealed antagonism of the authoritative representatives of Judaism made it plain that His Church must be independent of the temple and synagogues. It was not the plan of Jesus to force any premature severance, but with wise prevision He designed to prepare His disciples for the unescapable issue. In His individual followers He had sought to induce a habit of humility, conjoined with a temper of heroic daring: by their common allegiance to Himself, they formed a fellowship, and into this society Jesus breathed a legislative wisdom. Jesus was fully aware that misunderstanding would arise in a society of imperfect men; tares would grow up with the wheat, and perils would spring from the personal ambitions of His disciples. Foreseeing these, the inevitable incidents of any new society's developments, He could not but seek to forewarn and forearm His followers. Should one member of the fraternity give offence to another, the offended brother is instructed by Jesus to seek out the offender alone and endeavour to win him to repentance; if he fails in this purpose, two or three of the brethren shall remonstrate.<sup>1</sup> In a case of irreconcilable antagonism, the whole community ought to be informed; then, if the recalcitrant refused to obey the will of the ecclesia, he must be treated as having cut himself off from fellowship. Jesus Himself is thus credited in the Gospels with having laid the ground-plan of the internal discipline of this new society and to have solemnly committed to the apostolate the power of remitting or retaining sins. The right of punishment was delegated to the disciples by Jesus—not the chastisement of private faults, but of public offences.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xviii. 15-20; Luke xvii. 3.

This disciplinary power of binding and loosing by the apostolate is sanctioned in Heaven. The keys that were first promised to Simon, when He confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, are now given to all the disciples. The organization of the Church was at this stage simplicity itself; the common bond among the members was loyalty to Jesus, and the natural leaders were the Twelve who had been trained by our Lord Himself. These apostles, however, were to be the organs of the spirit of the ecclesia; they must remember that they are brothers of all the members, and that the true test of greatness lies in the humble service they render to others. It was the collective action of the Church that possessed the binding power, and not the inherent authority of the officials. Jesus warns His disciples against self-assertion and claims of superiority, against the use of titles—even the simple appellation of rabbi, since they are all alike children of the Sovereign Father. Their powers are moral and spiritual, bearing no resemblance to distinctions of rank and dignity which prevail in the world; let them agree with one another in prayer, and they should wield limitless influence, since God would certainly answer petitions made in the name of Jesus. While it may truly be that we have mingled apostolic inferences with the actual instructions of Jesus, it cannot, I think, be doubted that the Master Himself indicated the lines of the future development of His Church.

10. Such a Spiritual Society necessarily constituted an *imperium in imperio*—a coherent organization, which could be coterminous with the nation or with the whole race, and yet was not dependent upon, nor derived from, existing forms and institutions of civilization. It was to be the organized expression of the Kingdom of God. The fundamental ethic of this ecclesia is a spiritual socialism or brotherhood. Just as John had been indirectly reproached by the larger tolerance of Jesus, so Simon was at this time impressed by the new conception of magnanimity; in response to his inquiry if a disciple ought to forgive a brother seven times, Jesus inculcates the spirit of unlimited clemency.<sup>1</sup> The exclusion of an incorrigible offender from the fellowship must not be prompted by personal rancour, for men can only secure God's forgiveness by forgiving those who offend them. Jesus enforced this practical ethic of forgiveness by a striking

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xviii. 21f.

parable. A debtor once received his sovereign's remission of an immense debt—of the almost inconceivable sum of two millions four hundred thousand pounds—and then went and maltreated a fellow-slave, who owed him a paltry sum of twenty pounds, and threw him into prison. When the over-lord heard of this gross inhumanity, he revoked his own act of pardon and incarcerated the wretched oppressor "until he should pay all that was due." "So," said Jesus, "shall My Heavenly Father do to you, unless you cordially forgive everyone his brother." (The very enormity of the first debt and triviality of the other suggests the homiletic reflection that such is the contrast between man's immeasurable debt to God and the little wrongs which we do each other. This brotherly and placable temper does not minimize the true evil of sin, but it distinguishes, as with a sharp sword, between the wrong-doer and the evil done. It is not the yielding softness of weakness that Jesus inculcates, but the powerful control of the disciple's activity by the rule and Spirit of His Lord.)

II. We have so far endeavoured to restrict our review of the Church to the primitive stage of Christ's own originating act, to His definite and simple rules for its internal discipline, and for the conduct of the individual members; but it is obligatory upon us to make some passing reference to the Church's relation to the world. Professor Paul Wernle treats Christ's emphasis upon the need of individual regeneration as the noblest part of His teaching. "His work was to awaken the individual to love, and to make the individual realize his responsibility towards his brother; and thus Jesus did a work which beyond all others was for eternity; and still today He calls us back from the distracting maze of programmes and panaceas for the reform of the world, to the reform of our own selves, which is the reform which is chiefly needed."<sup>1</sup> Against this view Professor E. Caird has reminded us that Hegel at one time regarded Christianity "as a moral failure, just because it did not combine with any specific national institutions, so as to produce a living development of national character." "How light in the scale," said the great German, "weigh the whole 'means of grace' worked by the Church, backed by the most full and learned explanations, when the passions and the power of circumstances,

<sup>1</sup> Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, p. 82.

of education, of example, and of the government, are thrown into the opposite scale! The whole history of religion, since the beginning of the Christian era, combines to show that Christianity is a religion which can make men good only if they are good already.”<sup>1</sup> According to Origen, Celsus also urged that men should “take office” in the government of the country if that is required for the maintenance of the laws and the support of religion. But when the modern critic charges against Christianity, that it makes its moral appeal only to those who are good already, we exclaim that Celsus, centuries before Hegel, had made it an accusation against the Church that it appealed almost exclusively to those who are morally worthless. “Every one, they say, who is a sinner, who is devoid of understanding, who is a child, and, to speak generally, whoever is unfortunate, him will the Kingdom of God receive. Do you not call him a sinner, then, who is unjust, and a thief, and a house-breaker, and a prisoner, and a committer of sacrilege, and a robber of the dead? What others would a man invite, if he were issuing a proclamation for an assembly of robbers?”<sup>2</sup> Of the two critics we think Celsus the clearer-headed, and yet these counter-charges are neutralized by each other: perhaps our best answer to both is to place their criticisms in juxtaposition, as above. We refuse to admit that Christ’s teaching is adverse to genuine patriotism, even though this charge be repeated by thinkers of the repute of Hegel, Mazzini and Lecky; we believe, on the contrary, that Christianity creates the noblest patriots, although the real scope of the ethic of Jesus is not national but universal; and the Church, so far as it is loyal to its Founder, possesses an expansibility potentially as broad as the human race. Not only did Jesus refuse to be a political Messiah; He declined also the judicial functions of a merely social reformer. St. Luke narrates how, when asked to interfere in a dispute about property, Jesus said to the disinherited brother, who engages our sympathy, “Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?”<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the very spirituality and rigorous individualism of Jesus made Him universal; even those humanitarians who complain of His indifference to social problems have drunk deep draughts of inspiration from His timeless teaching. This true Messiah pressed back beyond the external symptoms of disorder

<sup>1</sup> *Hegel*, by E. Caird, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Origen against Celsus*, bk. iii., chap. lix.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xii. 13-15.



to the causes of disease in the heart, and the aim of His Personal Ministry and of His Church was to regenerate the springs of action within man. It is therefore a mistake to adjudge His Church as unsocial, unpatriotic and unconcerned about the institutions of the state. The time is at hand when men will be astonished at the potentiality, range, and applicability of the teaching of Jesus in all that concerns human life.

12. It is hardly possible to pass from this subject of the Messiah's Church without allusion to the unhappy divisions, jealousies and rivalries that have torn it into many sects. A gulf separates us all from the community planned by Jesus long ago. The societies which have appropriated His holy Name are given over too much to the dominance of men whose motives are found in worldly selfishness and in insatiable ambition. Oftentimes the political element in the Church has utterly stultified the religious principle. It was, perhaps, inevitable that the note of primitive simplicity should disappear from the Church as it became knit to the complex forms of civilization. The ideal can seldom be realized in the actual conditions of human history; the world's alloy was bound to be blended with the fine gold of Christ's teaching. There is an innate stubbornness in the material in which life seeks to express itself; and yet one feels that the Spirit of the Church's Founder might have been more faithfully followed. Amid all the legitimate expansions and schemes of organization, the supreme aim of the disciples ought ever to have been to express the mind of the Master. In His poverty, humiliation and self-sacrifice we discern the true characteristics of discipleship. The love of titles, the ambition for governing and sectarian partisanship have not only tended to destroy the Spirit of brotherhood, but have also introduced an alien character into the communion of Christ's brethren: hence, neither inwardly nor outwardly has the Church maintained that loyalty to the Messiah which alone can create catholicity and preserve its truth. The reform of the churches and their reunion can come only as we press back upon the Spirit of Christ, and throw off all institutions and ceremonies that prove themselves incompatible with His teachings concerning the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE DAYS OF HIS ANALEPSIS

I. THE Marcan construction of evangelic history has served as our general ground-plan of the Ministry of Jesus, but we have not hesitated to modify this by adopting suggestions arising out of the study of the Fourth Gospel, nor, seeing the lack of one fixed chronology, have we yielded to natural scruples against breaking up the lengthy interpolation which is found in St. Luke.<sup>1</sup> In his classical preface the third evangelist frankly records his own method and aim in his researches and in his literary effort; and, consequently, he has made it impossible to deny the substantial historicity of his portrait of Jesus without impugning his veracity. But while St. Luke thus supplies an anticipatory refutation of Strauss's idea that the Gospels grew from the activity of a myth-creating imagination, he does not make it incredible that the materials he gathered might be moulded and composed into a whole under the influence of some masterful pre-conception. The third evangelist may have first learned of Jesus from St. Paul, and the desire and design to write the narrative of His Ministry may have sprung from the dominating conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the Lord of the Apostolic Churches. While he was too honest to introduce into his gospel aught that he knew to be fictitious, or that was inharmonious with his own impression of the life of Jesus, it was inevitable that in the course of his narrative he should throw into prominence those aspects of the work of Jesus which convinced him that the Man of Nazareth was indeed the Lord preached by St. Paul. It is but fair to criticism, however, to admit that the faith in the Lordship of Jesus was due rather to spiritual experience than to historical evidence; and St. Luke, having received this conviction from his Spiritual Father, set out to find confirmation of the same in the extant traditions and oral testimonies of eye-witnesses. It does not follow, however, that the Evangelist forced and bent the accumulated materials of his narrative into a mould foreign to the thought and teaching of Jesus

<sup>1</sup>Luke ix. 51-xviii. 31.

Himself. By seeking to gain a clear unbiassed impression of Jesus from all the writings relating to His Ministry, we have been compelled to believe that He Himself did actually and repeatedly claim to be the Messiah and Master of men, even while He was engaged in transforming the popular ideas of Messiahship. Thus, as we found in our "Introduction," behind St. Paul, who taught St. Luke to know the Lord, stood Jesus Himself—a most real historical Person, intensely human and undeniably transcendent. Those critics who depreciate the validity of St. Luke's gospel because the Evangelist derived his Christianity from the Apostle of the Gentiles, might do well to ponder the careful judgement of Professor P. Wernle: "Facts prove that St. Paul knew Jesus in spite of all—yes, he knew Him better than all his predecessors. What he brought to the Greeks was no mere product of his imagination, but the real Jesus, with His promise, His claims, and His redemption."<sup>1</sup> Both St. Paul and his pupil illustrate the truth that the true perspective of things can be seen only at a certain distance. It is seldom that a contemporary immediately perceives in a comprehensive manner the true drift and meaning of current events.<sup>2</sup> We can, therefore, readily understand how this evangelist, looking back upon the historic events of the Ministry of Jesus from the coign of vantage of Pauline Christology, should interpret as a whole the period of Christ's self-dedication to the Cross, and group together a mass of incidents relevant to this concentrated determination of Jesus to offer Himself at Jerusalem.

2. Hence, in speaking of the period of the *Analepsis*, the unity given to the events grouped under the term is due not so much to chronological sequence as to the point of view occupied by the Evangelist. The affirmation affixed by St. Luke as an introduction to his "great interpolation" might at first lead many to imagine that the whole of the subsequent chapters relate to one, slow, Messianic progress towards the capital. Dr. A. Plummer,<sup>3</sup> for example, assumes that this was so; that the

<sup>1</sup> *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i., 267.

<sup>2</sup> In *One of Our Conquerors*, Meredith says of one called upon to recite the incidents of his journey: "The little man did not know that time was wanted to make the roadway or riverway of a true story, unless we press to invent; his mind had been too busy on the way for him to clothe in speech his impressions of incidents at the call for them."

<sup>3</sup> *Inter. Crit. Com.*, in loco.

journey lasted several months, treating the several allusions to various journeys in this intercalated section as simply showing that Jesus frequently stopped to preach at different places, while He was pursuing His last journey to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Others, however, after prolonged and repeated examination of this famous passage, have come to regard it as a compilation of events and teachings distributed over many months and happening in different places, believing that in the account itself are found allusions to several distinct journeys, while the last return to the capital<sup>2</sup> began much later than the date to be ascribed to some of the incidents in this part of the gospel, and that only a few weeks, instead of months, before the close of His earthly ministry did Jesus finally take His departure from Galilee. Although an arbitrary and unnecessary alteration of the sequence of events related in our Gospels must be deprecated, yet as soon as the attempt is made to form some chronological plan of the ministry, it becomes a plain necessity to transpose some of the incidents and sayings. The natural hesitation to incur such responsibility in dealing with the Lucan interpolation is lessened by the discovery that the Evangelist was determined as much by his governing idea of Jesus as by the chronology of his story in grouping his materials. Should it still be objected that so careful an historian as St. Luke is supposed to have been would not be likely to transgress all laws of chronology by "massing" irrelevant and disconnected materials, it can only be suggested in answer, that the Evangelist may have gathered the whole of this part of his gospel from sources apart from the main current of tradition, and that he saw that any attempt to distribute his new materials over the Marcan plan would only confuse and obscure the movement of events, more even than would be done by a bodily insertion of all his freshly discovered materials as a separate section of his gospel. But St. Luke was no bald chronicler, slavishly sitting at the foot of the letter and repeating what had been delivered to him by eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word; this pupil of St. Paul's had his own insights and original contributions of thought. As he pondered over the period which we have described as that of Christ's self-dedication, St. Luke perceived that our Lord was incessantly thinking of the tragic exodus He was about to make at Jerusalem, that whatever interruptions and delays might cross His path, His

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 51; xiii. 22; xvii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xvii. 11.

ruling motive was henceforth to accomplish His Messianic mission in Jerusalem. St. Luke has described, in solemn and stately words, the inward purpose and outward demeanour of "the Lord": "When the days were being fulfilled of His *analepsis*, He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." This evangelist intended that all his readers should look at the deepening gloom of tragedy in the light cast by the triumph of the Ascension, which was for himself the master-light of all his seeing.<sup>1</sup>

3. The Hebraistic phrase, that "Jesus set His face fixedly towards Jerusalem," shows that His thought had outrun experience and clearly grasped the goal;—that He apprehended the Cross. And all the Gospels agree in setting forth the calm deliberation and autonomy of Jesus as He drew near to the end; with unresting yet unshaking steps He moved toward the fulfilment of His Mission. The intensity of His own purpose and emotion reveals itself in the stern determination of His countenance. In every great life there are moments when all the faculties and attributes of personality become concentrated in powerful and sometimes prophetic activity; these are the self-revealing moments when all the passion and intention of the soul blaze forth in dynamical speech and eloquent action. At such dramatic periods, the soul throws its own flash-light upon the unknown future; to adopt the simile of a modern novelist, it is like a boat on lake Como at night, from the prow of which a small lantern casts its arrow of light upon the darkness ahead; sometimes such vaticinations of the unknown are pathetically futile, like the curiosity of man attacking God's impenetrable mysteries, fluttering into the darkness a few inches only to be swallowed up again in new gloom. But what impresses us in Jesus, as He forecasts the tragic future, is His tone of assurance and of mastery. The arrowy light of His Intelligence shot ahead so that He knew the gloom and terror of the immediate future, yet He appears scarcely to have thought of any possibility of escape. From the first foreword concerning His Passion, there steals into the narratives of His Ministry a note of deepening intensity: the triumphant certitude of His language, however, implies that the mystery predestined for Him is no longer impenetrable; He sees the Cross; and yet, beyond the midnight of sorrow, He already discerns the white dawn of the Resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 6-11.



This conception of our Lord is not, as some have thought, a pure idealization of the actual Mind of Jesus. Not only St. Luke, but also the other evangelists, relate that whenever He spoke of the darkness which threatened to quench the light of His life, He added that His immediate failure was to be followed by glorious triumph. Some readers of His life, proceeding from a dogmatic belief in His Divinity rather than from historical inquiry, have assumed that Jesus foresaw in clear and definite outline, the nature of the final crisis at the time of His struggle in the wilderness; but in this study we have been led to think that Calvary was hidden at the beginning; that, although He had keenly felt the pain of tearing Himself away from the popular Messianism, He still cherished the hope that Israel would receive His message, and that Jerusalem might become the centre of a great, world-embracing Spiritual Religion. The Baptist is represented to have described Jesus as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; and if he really used this language, he either spoke ecstatically, without understanding all the deep sacrificial implications of his words, or he was describing, in Isaianic terms, the innocence and gentleness of Jesus. John's own subsequent doubts and questioning show that he did not enter with any vital understanding into the necessity of Christ's suffering. The idea of the consummating sacrifice of the Lamb of God, though latent in the title ascribed to Jesus, had not yet been explicitly apprehended even by Jesus Himself. The Son of Man walked by faith and not by sight: hence, at the beginning, He was inspired by the ideal of God's Reign; but He had not then realized the terrible cost to Himself of its establishment. It appears that the first Galilean period of His Ministry had been marked by gladness and hope, and the people had seemed ready to respond to His high ideals. Soon, however, the Pharisees and Sadducees perceived that in the teaching of Jesus there was a dangerous, anarchic principle which would sooner or later subvert and shatter their own order: hence, they spurned His claims as intangible and unrealizable dreams. The Pharisees dogged His steps with jealous vigilance, angry and envious that the populace should be attracted by His gracious speech and many miracles. His open rupture with these accredited officials and teachers led the people to discredit Him, so that soon after He was rejected by them also. Then He who had breathed forth His thought of the Kingdom in idyllic beatitudes began to pour



out His soul in the lamentation of a terrible disappointment. In this mood Jesus had gone forth as an exile into heathen territory; there He faced the problem of His failure, and sought not only to instruct His disciples concerning the way of sorrow, but also to prepare their minds for the shock of approaching disaster. Jesus did not underestimate that sleepless hostility of the established authorities; He learned that the hour of His triumph must be preceded by one of doom. God's Love had planned man's redemption; man's hate invented the Cross; but Jesus foresaw that even the tragedy of Crucifixion would be instrumental in carrying out the Divine Purpose. He read the meaning of His Ministry through His consciousness of the Heavenly Father; and when He came to realize the necessity ( $\delta\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$ ) of the passion, His heart and will were given up in self-dedication, and He set His face toward Jerusalem.

4. Wieseler interpreted the *analepsis* to mean His "acceptance among men"; but assuredly the term is pregnant with fuller significance than that: the minimum of meaning we descry in it is an allusion to Christ's assumption into heavenly blessedness. This attempt, on St. Luke's part, to bring the self-dedicatory passages of our Lord's life under the burning focus of the light of a climactic and glorious dénouement is due not merely to the historian's backward glance over the perspective of the past months, but also to the foresight and prediction of Jesus. His eyes were often fixed on a glory that lay beyond the Cross; before He had evoked the disciples' confession of His Messiahship at Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus had begun not only to contemplate the necessity of His Passion, but also to view it as a means to an ulterior end. Thus we find Him maintaining an even trust in His Father in the darkest passages of experience; and repeatedly He affirmed that failure was His way to triumph. Jesus became too intimate with the world's sin and sorrow to move amid scenes so sad with a light heart. One of the practical issues of His Ministry was to make Him acquainted with the inevitable lot of suffering; but, as the shadowing presage of doom fell upon His soul, He made an irrevocable surrender to the Father's Will; and while straitened by the oppressive sense of that baptism of blood, He passed in faith to a strong, clear vision of His ultimate victory. Yet while the foretaste of triumph was given to Him, Jesus never overlooked the dark passage which led to the goal;

but, knowing that death could but prove an entrance into life, He went steadily forward without allowing Himself to be paralyzed by morbid fears. Jesus possessed the foresight of perfect faith. Not only is the future hidden from most men, but because of their lack of faith in the Father they suffer ills which never come, and taste many times over the bitter pangs of death. Christ's vaticinations of His Resurrection were not born of superior mental perspicacity merely; nor even of Divine foreknowledge, but rather of His absolute faith in the goodness of the Father. The prediction of His Resurrection is too easily explained by those who assume that Jesus exercised Divine omniscience; while the difficulty of such definite anticipations of future events is enormous in the eyes of those who would reduce Him to the stature of ordinary men, and regard such sayings as due to the light thrown back upon the half-remembered words of Jesus from the Church's later faith. There are two doubts which alternately assail the mind: the one a common doubt today of the Divinity of Jesus, and the other a profounder doubt of His humanity. "As soon as men had time to collect their thoughts about Christ and begin to put them in a systematic form, they were more inclined to doubt the manhood which had lived among them than the deity they had spiritually known."<sup>1</sup> For ourselves, we know but one safe path for thought—the resolute recognition of all the phenomena of Christ's Ministry, whether they seem so human as to hide His Divinity, or whether they appear to pass beyond the limits of man's life. It ought ever to be kept in mind, however, that Jesus was not only human, but more human—more perfectly man than any other teacher the world has ever known. It is we ourselves that are abnormal; He is the true norm. And being man, Jesus could not escape the incidence of pain and struggle, but through suffering and unswerving obedience to the Divine Will He was made perfect. The history of the closing weeks of His Ministry shows that His was no effortless obedience; it throws also, into great clearness, the intensity of His emotional and spiritual life. He set Himself to accomplish a definite mission—some of the implications and issues of which are yet to be considered by us—fixing His face, with mighty self-constraint, toward Jerusalem. St. Luke indicates that the key of His life must be found in the Ascension—those weeks of suffering, of inward struggle, of slow martyr-

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin, *The Knowledge of God*, vol. ii., p. 82.

dom were to be understood only from the viewpoint of the *analepsis*.

5. One of the characteristics of the Four Gospels is their inextricable blending of elements usually assumed to be incompatible—the Divine with the human, the supernatural with the natural, the transcendent with the mundane. It gives no shock of surprise to the reader, therefore, to find the mysterious *analepsis* of Jesus brought into close connection with the days of Christ's Passion; to find the *anaplerosis* linked together with the self-emptying of the Son; to perceive the glorification of Christ set forth as the goal of the humiliation. We pass, without any feeling of abruptness from St. Luke's anticipation of the Ascension, to the historical last journey of the Master to Jerusalem. The route from Capernaum to Jericho is still a debated question. "He departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan."<sup>1</sup> It would seem that Jesus travelled eastward along the boundaries of Galilee and Samaria; avoiding all entrance into Samaritan territory, He reached Peræa and turned southward. There occurred an incident on this journey which exhibited, all too painfully, the ingratitude of those who received the beneficent healing of Jesus.<sup>2</sup> A company of ten lepers met Him with appeals for help, and when, in obedience to His command, they went toward Jerusalem to show themselves to the priests, they discovered in themselves a new movement of health and recovery. It was so marvellous a case of healing in a disease usually obstinate in resisting all remedies, that it appears all the more surprising that any lack of gratitude should have occurred. Only one of the healed men returned, a Samaritan, and "magnifying God with a loud voice, he fell on his face, at the feet of Jesus, giving Him thanks." "Were the ten not made clean?" said Jesus, "Where are the nine? Is there no one to return and do honour to God except this foreigner? Rise and go: thy faith hath saved thee."

6. As we saw, Jesus had been forced, by the resolute hostility of His enemies, to suspend His public work and to devote Himself to the private instruction of His disciples; but when He came into the regions of Peræa He felt free to begin to teach openly again. This resumption of His public work appears to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xvii. 11-19.

have occasioned a temporary revival of His popularity; and resurgence of the appreciation of Jesus by the people was demonstrated in the crowds which accompanied Him, and culminated shortly in His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. His former brief visit to Peræa—interrupted, as we think, by the miracle at Bethany—had made an indelible impression upon the populace; and the kind of reception now given to Him may be inferred from the story of the mothers coming to Jesus with their babes.<sup>1</sup> He had evidently impressed them as the Gracious Son of Man. But the disciples, deluded once again with false hopes of the Messianic Kingdom, felt that their Master was suffering a loss of dignity, and under the impulse of worldly ambitions attempted to repulse the women, bringing upon themselves the rebuke of their Lord. Perhaps it was the chivalrous tenderness shown toward those women that gave some Pharisees the occasion they were waiting for to seek to entangle Jesus into an expression of His disregard for Jewish laws. “Is it right,” they asked “for a man to divorce his wife?” At that time the facility of divorce led to grave results; for a mere whim, caprice, or sensual desire was frequently made the ground of separation between man and wife. At a counter-interrogation, the Pharisees quoted the Mosaic law<sup>2</sup> on the matter; then Jesus uttered His original *dictum*, “Moses wrote this ordinance with a view to your stubbornness of heart,”<sup>3</sup> and referred back to the law implicit in creation as against any dissolution of the union of man and wife. In speaking thus of Moses, Jesus but accepted the contemporary belief about the authorship of the Pentateuch. Later on, in a house where He was lodging, He said to His disciples,—“Whosoever shall divorce his wife . . . and marry another, commits adultery.” The exception made in the case of fornication may have been spoken by Jesus, but it was not His habit to qualify His bold, original and arresting statements by specifying exceptions. Justice demands that if fornication be made a ground of divorce, the same law should be applicable to the husband as to the wife. Jesus did not intend to bind men with particular rules; He laid down principles which may be interpreted and applied with exactitude only where His own Spirit dwells. As a matter of fact, it may be that separation would often be preferable to a union that prolongs misery and

<sup>1</sup> Luke xviii. 15-17.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxiv. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xix. 3-12; Luke xvi. 18.



urges mutual provocation. Jesus showed superb courage and freedom in thus teaching that the external, Mosaic code was but a temporary, provisional economy corresponding to the imperfect stage of man's moral development. His aim was to emancipate the conscience from laws which had been made intolerable by subtle refinements and sophistical additions. With simple directness He penetrated to the core of legalism and enunciated a few rational principles for human guidance; for He had perceived that the gossamer threads of Pharisaic sophistry were more enslaving to the soul than outward chains. Not long before, it is true, Jesus had shown His respect for Judaism by sending the lepers to the priests to perform the legal rights of cleansing; now, with unprecedented boldness He waived the Mosaic legislation and annulled the binding power of ancient Judaism. Jesus was too great to be concerned about a superficial consistency. He felt that it was necessary to destroy the outward bondage of the letter, in order that the conscience should be ruled by higher principles. He was the Messiah of a New Covenant—the Teacher of a law written upon the fleshly tablets of the human heart. But in teaching that the whole dispensation of the law was but a parenthesis in an evangelic theodicy, He was offending the whole established order of Judaism, and thus advanced another step in His self-dedication to the Cross in the days of His *analepsis*.

7. During these days of the transient revival of His popularity, when the disciples were once more encouraged to hope for the attainment of political power, there came an opportunity of winning a wealthy and influential adherent to their movement, who, had Jesus chosen, might have done much to turn aside the opposition of the established authorities.<sup>1</sup> A rich man knelt with every token of reverence before Jesus, and asked, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" To the surprise of all, Jesus seemed to repel the conventional title—seeking, we suppose, to turn back the man's mind to reflect more profoundly on his own ideal of moral good. The reference to the Decalogue, as the way of eternal life, was characteristic of Jesus' way of meeting man at some point of his personal knowledge and experience. With self-complacency the inquirer made the superficial yet ingenuous boast that he had kept these laws from his

<sup>1</sup> Luke xviii. 18-30; Matt. xix. 16-29; Mark x. 17-30.



youth. Attracted by the man's evident sincerity, Jesus defined the moral ideal as perfect love, and instructed him to sell all his property, and to distribute the proceeds among the poor; then to take up the Cross and follow Him. The mind of Jesus was still preoccupied with the thought of His approaching doom, which could not be evaded if He went on to Jerusalem, and He calls this candidate for discipleship to share His own fate. At this reply the man's face fell; he was disappointed and went away with a heavy heart, not being able to make such absolute renunciation. The Twelve may have shown, by their looks, that they thought the Master had thrown away a great opportunity through want of tact; and Jesus, looking round on them, exclaimed, "How hard it is for those who have property to enter into the Reign of God!" Seeing that His disciples failed to comprehend, He added, "How hard it is for those who put their trust in riches to enter into the Reign of God!" Poverty itself can be no prize; its value lies in its power to beget dependence upon God and to engender a lowliness of temper in intercourse with men. Wealth is dangerous in its seductions to trust in outward things. Most men are betrayed by false values; but the mind of Jesus searched to the heart of all possessions with unrivalled clarity and penetration. All who follow Him will lose their pathetic illusions about the worth of wealth, and will come to learn that the poor can enjoy God all the better for being unhampered and unhindered by outward possessions.

8. The first feeling of disappointment speedily gave place in Simon's breast to a self-righteous boast, "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee." Said Jesus, "I tell you truly, there is no man who leaves house, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands for My sake and for the gospel's sake, without receiving a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come life eternal. But many who are first shall be last, and the last first." In St. Matthew's gospel, Peter is represented as asking pointedly what reward the disciples will have, and Christ's answer is cast into the mould of the popular Messianic hope. This is followed<sup>1</sup> by the parable of the Vineyard, in which the labourers all receive one wage of a *denarius*, irrespective of the hours of their employment. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 1-16.

Jesus taught that men cannot trade and barter with God, nor insult the Sovereignty of His Love by envying the well-being of others. Men ought not to reckon their services for God on a commercial basis, as though they were hirelings. The upspringing of this hope of earthly rewards contrasted with His own Spirit of self-sacrifice; and from His words we judge that Simon's question jarred upon His own mood of self-dedication. Still, Jesus was too magnanimous to allow the wound in His own heart to obscure His recognition of the sacrifices made by the disciples: hence, He combined with His warning against commercial religion a promise of magnificent reward for genuine fidelity to His cause. In following Him the spiritual gains outweigh all losses; poverty is transmuted to spiritual wealth, persecution to blessedness, and the loss of friendships is recompensed with new relationships, even while His disciples suffer persecutions. On the way to the Cross, Jesus encouraged His disciples with promises of limitless bliss; and as He sets His face toward Jerusalem He dispenses thrones and gifts as a conqueror; but the "thrones" in His Mind were symbolic of spiritual sway, and not of material splendour. Here again the radiance of the *analepsis* fell on the *via dolorosa*.

9. Through the reminiscences of this last journey toward the City of Doom, there runs one unifying hope of the Resurrection and of His assumption into some glorious life of the Spirit. Living right in the midst of those experiences, the disciples were but dimly aware of the true trend of His Ministry; but when at last they witnessed His Ascension, they perceived the real synopsis of the past three years. If we take away the crowning event of the Resurrection, then the Cross is shorn of its glory, and stands amid the hopeless ruins of history as the dread symbol of defeat. The *analepsis* transfigures the gloom and explains the Divine telos of the whole. The set face of Jesus, turned so resolutely toward Jerusalem, is lighted with the triumphant energy of invincible hope. Apart from this vision of the goal, the events of His life appear chaotic and confusing, and His conduct and words become tinged with a semblance of "subtlety and finesse." Illusive as were the dreams of the Kingdom which dominated the Mind of Jesus in His early Galilean ministry, they exercised an educative influence upon Him and led Him through suffering to perfection. Delusions end in dis-

appointment; but illusions find a fulfilment more profound than at first anticipated. Jesus' first illusive hope of the Kingdom passed into the clarified vision of a nobler triumph. The suffering He realized acquired the significance of spiritual sacrifice, and "He has linked it with the laws of the universe and with the Invisible Mind of God." If for a moment His ideal were submerged amid the clash of hostile wills, it was soon lifted up again in a glorious realization, so that all the world might see. The *analepsis* terminated the earthly ministry, and inaugurated the Messiah's Heavenly session; to this point all the lines of past history converge, and from this focus springs the noblest inspiration for the future.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MINISTRY OF RANSOM

I. HOWEVER slowly the Messiah pursued His journey toward the capital, He had long since determined to face His enemies and endure the utmost suffering the leaders of the nation might devise. Sustained by this unwavering resolution, the prevailing mood of Jesus was one of ecstasy and moral exaltation, clashing painfully with the earth-born aims of the disciples. As they walked along the road, the aloofness of Jesus from His companions was perceptible in the feelings of constraint and dissatisfaction. He was absorbed in His contemplation of the Cross, while they were preoccupied with the thought of earthly thrones. The expression of set determination in the Master's face amazed the Twelve; they could not understand Him, but followed with fear. Such, at least, is St. Mark's graphic description of the occasion: "Now," says the Evangelist, "they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went in front of them. And they were in dismay, while some who followed were in fear."<sup>1</sup> They vaguely felt that something in His mood, which was betokened in His look and demeanour, menaced their ambitions and endangered all their hopes. They were but uncomfortable companions for Jesus then, and, as a mental alienation between Himself and them pressed upon Him, they fell behind Him as men overawed. It was as though they divined, in His rapt ecstasy and solemn carriage, a mysterious, prophetic activity which lifted Him away from His human associates. The imagination of Jesus was surcharged with momentous realities of the Spirit, while the disciples were chained to the work of the senses; they grovelled still in the materialism of their age. But presently the lonely Messiah was oppressed by the strained relations between Himself and the men He loved, and He sought to convey to them something of His own high thoughts. He "took the Twelve aside privately"<sup>2</sup> and told them once again of the death which lay before Him, adding fresh details to the

<sup>1</sup> Mark x. 32-34.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xx. 17-19.

repeated prediction: "Lo, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered to the high-priests and scribes. They shall sentence Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify. Yet on the third day, He shall rise again." The definiteness, minutiae and precision of this prophecy will impress many minds with a natural doubt whether such a saying can be attributed to Jesus at all. If it be taken for granted that such prediction is an *a priori* impossibility, then we must deem the evangelists guilty of a wrong artifice in graduating the disclosures of the Passion attributed to Jesus. There is such verisimilitude in the advance from vague presentiment to definite prediction, from the bare affirmation of inevitable suffering to the full forecast of all the details of His doom, that if the anticipations be not regarded as veritably spoken by Jesus, they will assuredly be interpreted as culpable misrepresentations. Personally, we accept the historicity of these graduated vaticinations of the end, and we believe that the Master Himself reiterated His predictions with greater detail and fulness at the several crises of His self-dedication. The phenomena of the Old Testament will not allow us to strip the prophets of all predictive foresight; although not their chief or sole function, it is irrefutable that those inspired men were often seers of future events. And this extraordinary gift belonged to Jesus; He was pneumatically sensitive both to the current events and to the inevitable developments of the movements of His time; He foresaw and, we believe, foretold with detailed accuracy, the issues of His personal ministry, judging all things in the light of His goal.

2. The spasmodic revival of His popularity in Peræa did not deceive Jesus, although it misled the disciples; in the heat of the excitement the Messiah was not once diverted from His resolute pursuit of self-sacrifice. Had He been as other men and drawn His incentives from selfish ambition, He would have sought to retain the good-will of the people, even at the cost of compromise, as the means of a more facile founding of His Kingdom. The disciples were disappointed again and again that Jesus was so unworldly and unpractical that He allowed such opportunities of confirming His moral influence over men to slip away unused. It may be frankly assumed that most teachers desirous of founding a new order would have readily accepted



advances made by representatives of the professional classes; but Jesus, as the Gospels show, repelled the learned, wealthy and influential men of His nation by harsh demands of renunciation. Such absolute fidelity to an ideal seems too impracticable for this world of compromise; it was, consequently, inevitable that Jesus should fail and become the martyr of His faith. This Messiah may be truly described as the conscience of Humanity; He was tremulously sensitive to all the infidelities and sins of men; therefore to Himself He must be true, whatever the cost might be. Having preached His lofty idealism to others, He dared not deviate from His own standard of faith. He lived the faith He taught; His own pure ideal was made incarnate; and, by this very contrast, He condemned the selfishness of men. Thus, we have come to a point in the Ministry of Jesus when, to understand His own profound sayings concerning His suffering and sacrifice, we must enter imaginatively into the mind of Jesus, recalling His claim to autonomy, even while He submitted to outward and physical violence. The mere incident of bodily pain was the least part of the Passion of Jesus; His most real anguish sprang from His quivering consciousness of the world's wrong.

3. Other men might interpret the Crucifixion as the ignominious failure of religious idealism, but Jesus made such defeat itself the instrument of executing His purpose in the world. The dark shadow of the Cross which fell on His pathway never once made Him waver, or wish to turn back. He trusted too fully in the Heavenly Father to doubt the issue of obedience to the Divine Will, even when death itself confronted Him. This personal faith in God's justice grew into a definite assurance that the Father would not leave the Son in Hades. But it must not be imagined that this moral certitude saved Him from the fluctuations of emotion and trials of will. For instance, the good conscience He kept before His Father was itself a cause of offence to the disciples He loved so profoundly, and became an occasion of mutual misunderstanding. The clash of antagonistic ideals made this misunderstanding an unescapable issue. On the one hand, Jesus Himself found the mirror of His own history in the fate of the gentle, strong martyr of the deuterо-Isaiah's prophecy. There He learned that "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him": hence, He faced the approaching tragedy with a deliberate, calm dignity and resolute self-immolation. On the other hand,

the disciples shared the popular prepossessions of the Messiah's Davidic revival of political and military conquest: hence, they looked for a time when Jesus should be King and execute judgment on the earth. But such hopes as these, which had sprung first from the sentiment of patriotism, and which the great prophets had raised into a moral ideal for the nation, were illusory; for at this time, although Jesus accepted the confession of Messiahship, He looked forward to a public and dreadful death, knowing that already the national authorities had determined to deliver Him to the Romans. But this foreseen fate was not looked upon by Jesus Himself as a mere misfortune, or evil chance arising from an uncontrolled conflict of world-forces, but as a sacrifice made necessary on moral grounds and integrated into the Divine and providential order of history, and destined to become the focus of a new Christian *Weltansicht*. In seeking to understand the attitude and Mind of Jesus in view of His swift-coming doom, it is needful that His personal religious consciousness and ethical principles shall be remembered, since these constituted the media through which He himself interpreted the events of life. First, therefore, His prevision of death must be brought into connection with His consciousness of the Heavenly Father; then it must be related to His spiritual interpretation of God's Reign as realizable in the inward, moral life of the good man; thirdly, it must not be overlooked that to the Mind of Jesus physical death was as a sleep and an introduction into fuller life. Hence it came about that His voluntary acceptance of His death focused into one concentrated blaze of splendid light all the ideas and emotions cherished in the Ministry of Jesus. His sacrifice gave new accentuation and meaning to the doctrines taught by Him. So much, at least, may be acknowledged alike by those who in theological matters are conservative and those who represent the advanced school of liberalism.

4. As Jesus uttered His clear, distinct prediction of swift-approaching doom on this last journey, the disciples deemed Him to be the victim of a dreadful hallucination. The light He offered was as darkness to men who were still morally unprepared: hence, His words made so inadequate impression correspondent with their momentous meaning. To the eyes of children the stars are simply points of light pricked out on the

plane-surface of the sky, though by-and-by they will understand them to be mighty worlds moving through illimitable space. And yet it cannot but appear strange, and to many incomprehensible, that after accompanying with the Master so long, those disciples could remain almost to the end free from all presentiments of coming disaster. An instance of their obsession and consequent imperviousness to the clearest forecast is afforded by the ambitious sons of Zebedee, or by their mother, who sought to secure from Jesus a promise of future remembrance and particular favour. According to St. Matthew,<sup>1</sup> the mother came to Jesus with the request, "Say that these my sons shall sit one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left hand in Thy reign." These ideas of a materialistic Messianism clung to the disciples like the famous robe smeared with the curdled blood of Nessus, and poisoned all their thoughts of Jesus. Yet such irrepressible hopes of a temporal restitution of Israel increase the marvel of the personal spell of Jesus, that in spite of these preconceptions which ruled the disciples, when confronted by the hostility of the authorized representatives of Judaism, He could yet win their faith that He was the Messiah. Hitherto, James and John had shared with Simon the closest intimacy with Jesus, and the intervention of Salome, who appears to have been a sister of the mother of Jesus, savours too much of intrigue. If the mother voiced their petition, the answer of Jesus was directed to the two disciples: "You know not what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" And they say to Him, "We are able." Jesus said,

"The cup that I drink, you shall drink:  
 And the baptism that I am baptized with, shall you be baptized with.  
 But to sit on My right hand or on My left hand is not Mine to grant;  
 It is for those for whom it has been made ready."

At that time Jesus would fain have had His disciples think of suffering rather than of triumph, and He recalled to their minds His oft-reiterated teaching about cross-bearing and dying, connecting His own experience with what they also must pass through—a coördination that should not be lost when we recognize the transcendent merit of the sacrifice of Jesus. The self-confident assertion that they were able to endure all things,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xx. 20f.

suggests to us that they spoke with the overweening assurance and defective understanding of children knowing not the meaning of the "cup" and the "baptism." Although Jesus declares that the offices and rewards of His reign are distributed by Divine predestination, we feel that His thoughts are altogether remote from theirs. In this disclaimer of the prerogative to grant royal favours from Himself, we perceive His consistent lowliness, which was always linked with His conscious dignity, and trace the unswerving continuance of a surrendered will.

5. When the other disciples learned of this somewhat unscrupulous attempt to over-reach themselves by wresting a secret promise from the Master, they were naturally indignant. The dispute which followed was terminated for the time by the declaration of Jesus, that greatness in God's Reign must be determined by the measure of service men render—a standard diametrically opposed to the despotism of earthly kings. "But whoever would become great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you, must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." This is the rule of Jesus, and however harmonious it may be with the higher reason in man, it is in contradiction to all the ordinary impulses and desires for self-aggrandizement. Such words are admitted to possess an indisputable originality and to reflect the lofty mind of the Speaker, but generally they are treated as inapplicable to the affairs of this world. No laboured argument is required to convince men that this rule does not obtain in our modern civilization—not even in the Christian churches; nor can we, by any sophistry, bring the ordinary behaviour of men into line with this teaching. Its applicability depended upon the power of Jesus to breathe a new temper into the hearts of His disciples—a spirit which would slay all ambitions save that of rendering service to others. Only in so far as our natural tempers are subdued by the gracious influence of Jesus, will this rule be observed in the conduct of life. Some of Dora Greenwell's thoughtful reflections concerning a *life-giving supernaturalism* seem to us to express this truth with great lucidity and force: "Christianity," she says, "is supernatural alike in what it gives and what it claims; it begins and ends in miracle. The Christian life, for instance, appears a very simple one; yet it is in truth



an *impossible* one, as the humblest Christian knows, except under the conditions of supernatural life and supernatural aid." Again, "Our blessed Lord's deep sayings, His mighty and merciful deeds, seem natural, and just what belongs to the occasion, and yet everything in these writings transcends the accustomed level of humanity. I say *everything*, for the raising of Lazarus and the turning of water into wine are as possible to the natural powers of man, as much within his unaided reach, as is the morality of the Sermon on the Mount, or the pure, fervent charity of the Epistles." This devout writer likens the New Testament to a mountain region, where the common objects are transfigured and where a sense of remoteness is linked with an instinct of familiarity: "Through all I have a sense of something which is foreign to the present order of life, foreign to it and yet friendly, as if it belonged to some region towards which man is travelling, but at which he has not yet arrived."<sup>1</sup>

6. This *logion* about the ransom-service is self-evidently genuine; no one but Jesus could have uttered it. The importance and value of this saying, in treating of the inward consciousness and purpose of the Ministry of Jesus, cannot be exceeded; it sums up the motives and aims of His life and explains His voluntary acceptance of death. All that is known about Jesus demonstrates the fact that He spent Himself wholly in the service of humanity. The giving up of His life was a continuing process, and not simply a single incident; a ministry of self-sacrifice was perfected and crowned in His act of final surrender. In the course of this attempt to depict the manifold aspects of His life we have alluded again and again to the gracious beauty of the Personal Religion of Jesus; but this saying of His now carries the thought beyond His human piety to His conscious performance of mighty spiritual action on behalf of mankind. The germ of Pauline Christianity is in this single saying. The cultivation of a devout life, of His own ethical and religious ideas, was but a small part of the mission of Jesus; from the beginning at the Jordan-side until this last journey to Jerusalem, He had given the service of His life, and now He is preparing to give His life in the service of a ransom. Thus He Himself attributed to His death an efficacy not found in life; in His own thought it appeared as a sacrifice which, if we may use

<sup>1</sup> *Two Friends*, pp. 131, 132.



St. Paul's terms, had the value of propitiation. This remarkable word, "ransom," said to have been used by Jesus, ought not to be treated as though it were spoken by a scientific theologian; it is poetry—a metaphor struck from the mind at white heat. The language of Jesus lives and burns; His words are winged with imagination; but it must never be supposed that His actual meaning was narrower than His impressive speech. Jesus had been thinking of the various modes of service which may be rendered by members of His Kingdom; then, by a natural transition, He passes to the thought of His sufferings and death, affirming that the Messiah's greatest service to the race lies in His giving His life as a ransom, that by this service "many" will be delivered. Jesus had learnt the mysterious secret of History, that the world's true advancement is secured by suffering, pain and sacrifice. Although we avoid the pedantic aim of extracting every possible meaning from our Lord's metaphor, we dare not follow the reaction which denies all serious meaning to it; at least, it must be admitted that Jesus attributed to His death an efficacy to release men from inward bondage. We do not now discuss whether the emancipating force of His sacrifice is due to moral influence or to some profounder action inexplicable apart from mysticism; our emphasis falls rather on the authenticity of the word "ransom," and its implication that the Truth which should make men free was made known in Jesus' death. Had not Caiaphas said "it was expedient for one man to die for the nation"? Jesus now takes up the word of cynicism and breathes into it this great idea of ransom; He would not only die for men, but He would set them free to realize the Reign of God.

7. Jesus Himself pointed out that an analogy existed between the "ransom" He would offer and the sacrificing service demanded from His disciples. They had hitherto thought chiefly of a kingdom of rewards, while He had instructed them concerning a Reign of altruism. His own anticipation of crucifixion leads Him to inculcate the duty of cross-bearing upon them. Since Jesus laid such emphasis upon the affinity between His own experience and theirs, we ought not to hesitate to recognize at least a partial reproduction of His martyrdom in the lives of His followers. This analogy should be fearlessly exploited, in all its length, breadth and depth, by those who seek the meaning

of the ransom made by Jesus. The Master promised that His disciples should be taken up into the fellowship of His sufferings: "The cup that I drink, you shall drink, and the baptism that I am baptized with, shall you be baptized with." The fact that we find in human experience not a few instances of the purifying and ennobling influences of pain; that we often meet notable examples of vicarious suffering and sin-bearing, and that civilization and individual character are alike improved by self-denial and sacrifice, helps us to apprehend some of the experiences of Jesus. But when we have frankly acknowledged this analogy, we are further impelled to reflect upon differences and contrasts between the ordinary passages of human life and the Passion of Jesus. Though He Himself might lawfully speak of the Crosses of the disciples, still even the martyrs themselves have shrunk from describing their death as a "ransom." And while we render the amplest recognition of Christ's own stress upon the fact that He is one with our race in its emotions and activities, we must also own that, in the preëminence of His sorrow and supreme value of His death, Jesus stands alone. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"; but neither Tertullian nor any other has dared to affirm that it is a "ransom": hence, we are compelled to admit that Jesus attributed to His own death a value and an importance which have never been assigned to the death of any other martyr. The sublime motive of this "ransom" was to bring men to the Father. In some degree Jesus coördinated His own with His disciples' sufferings; but His disciples confess that they are willing to be sacrificed "for His sake," and so acknowledge His Lordship and uniqueness. The personal equation can never be omitted from the experiences of Jesus: hence, His Passion is differentiated from the kindred sufferings of His followers by the value and character of His Person. A certain note of universality belongs to His sacrifice of Himself; He acted for God and He represented all men; His death has wrought mightily as a ransom—an emancipating force in our race.

8. Weeks and even months prior to His Crucifixion, Jesus resolved to make this sacrifice; voluntarily and with self-determination He set His face toward this goal. He became not only the victim of sacrifice, but also a sacrificing Priest. The dominating principle of His action and His Passion was love for

the Father and for His brethren. Those who define the ransom as a price paid to God for man's forgiveness blaspheme the Father, and no one in these days dreams of saying that it was paid to the devil; while, to personify sin and make it the object of such ransom, empties the Master's word of reality. Jesus did not deal with ethical abstractions; He lived and acted in the realm of persons. This great key-word connotes deliverance, and the inward and moral intention of the ransom must be inferred from the whole drift of His teaching. The message of grace dominated all His preaching; He came for the remission of sin—to emancipate men from a vitiated heredity, from environing debasement and from evil habits. The profoundest words of Jesus were broadly human, not juridical; ethical, not ceremonial; of grace, not of law. He spoke much of forgiveness, love, peace, freedom, the way, the truth and the life; and if we place His word "ransom" in the midst of this constellation of ideas, it will neither be hardened into theological dogma nor evaporated as a "mere figure of speech." Analogies may be rightly drawn from legal institutions and sacrificial ceremonies; but if the metaphors of Jesus be treated as though they are terms of science rather than of religious imagination, we lose their beauty and meaning. A note of triumph rings in this term "lutron"; for it breathes the assurance that He shall see the travail of His soul in turning many to righteousness. The ransom-service of Jesus was a sacrificial life, crowned by His deliberate, voluntary acceptance of an ignominious death; and the prophetic word has been verified and justified by history: for, in dying, Jesus gained a great, spiritual emancipation for mankind.



BOOK VII  
THE ROYAL PROGRESS AND MESSIANIC  
STRUGGLE





## CHAPTER I

### THROUGH JERICHO TO BETHANY

1. WITH considerable diffidence and readiness to receive correction, we have made a serious chronological transposition of the Johannine representations of the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, and of His great miracle at Bethany, tentatively placing the events before the crucial incident of feeding the multitudes when the people wanted to compel Him to be their King. At the risk of an accusation of wearisome reiteration, but with the hope of clarifying our survey of the remaining days of Jesus, we refer again to this rearrangement of the materials given in the Gospels, as exhibiting an ordered development of this earthly ministry, throwing light on the motives of Jesus, and on the reasons for the official rejection of Him as the claimant of Messiahship. The best justification of such attempted adjustments of chronology is found in the resultant enhancement of intelligibility in the records. The transpositions that we have ventured upon in the course of this study result at least in a certain dramatic fitness—though this has not been our guiding principle—helping us to perceive, in the Ministry of Jesus, a beginning, middle and end, whereby the final passages are thrown into bold relief. Very impressive and significant are the fulness, prominence and detail attaching to the close of His work, as represented in the Gospels. The contrast between the meagreness of the knowledge of His earlier work and the comparative fulness of that of the later, can be explained only by the stupendous value found in the Passion by the first witnesses. Professor Burkitt reminds us, “On the very shortest estimate the length of the ministry must have extended to about four hundred days, and I doubt if our Gospels contain stories from forty separate days. So the nine-tenths at least of the public life of Jesus remains to us a blank, even if we were to take every recorded incident ‘as historical and accurately reported.’”<sup>1</sup> Of the three years’ history we have only the outlines: “there are

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 20.

also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." That only one-tenth of the public life of Jesus is recorded at all makes it appear all the more significant that the final phase of His Ministry should be represented with such amplitude of detail. It is no satisfactory explanation of this unequal emphasis upon the closing scenes, to attribute it solely to the more vivid remembrance of what was latest in Christ's public life; the accentuation of this part of His life at least witnesses of the increased importance attached by the apostles to the concluding tragedy which began with His resolute journey toward Jerusalem. This incidence of emphasis upon the last days of our Lord is not peculiar to one evangelist; it is, rather, the common characteristic of all the writers of the New Testament, and represents the prevailing attitude of primitive Christian thought. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to set forth as clearly as possible the successive steps in this period of the consummation of that work that Jesus had planned to accomplish in the world; seeking, as we do so, to discern His controlling thought as He approached, with clear foreknowledge and autonomy, toward His predestined doom.

2. It has already become plain that, while the renewal of Jesus' public ministry in Peræa, with its consequent revival of popularity, had excited afresh the vain hopes of the disciples, Jesus Himself was reminded at every step that the road He had entered upon must end in death. His route lay across the Jordan and through the city of Jericho, which the family of Herod had made beautiful again. This city of ancient fame was about eighteen miles from the capital; between it and Jerusalem was Bethany, on the slopes of Olivet, and about two miles from Jerusalem. From St. John's statement<sup>1</sup> that Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover, it may be inferred as probable that He reached Jericho on a Thursday, and spent the night in the house of Zacchæus. If we had to depend on St. Mark's gospel alone, there would be no alternative to the suggestion that from Jericho Jesus travelled to Jerusalem in one day, entering the capital amid the plaudits of excited pilgrims, and that after a hurried visit to the temple He came back to Bethany the same evening. In this matter, as also in several others, we

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 1.

derive a more correct impression from the Johannine record. Further, the first two evangelists place the Supper and Anointing at Bethany two days prior to the Crucifixion, but St. John relates that it happened several days before. The Marcan arrangement is probably due to the topical connection between Mary's lavish gift and Judas's treachery. "The truth is, that it happened as John relates; and Matthew and Mark, following perhaps the catechetical practice, bring the story of what befell at Bethany into juxtaposition with the Betrayal."<sup>1</sup> Although the chronological sequence is confused in this way, a very distinct impression is made upon the reader's mind that Mary's beautiful devotion gave the occasion for exposing Judas's avarice, and precipitated the final act of treachery that led to the arrest of Jesus. This is but a single instance of St. John's intentional modifications of the Synoptic accounts, and the examination of these so-called discrepancies convinces us that the fourth evangelist aimed not only at supplementing the earlier records with facts drawn from his own mental repertory, but also at correcting the existing accounts wherever he thought them to err. If this impression of the fourth evangelist's design be true, then he must have been an authority qualified for such a work by being, what he claimed to be, an eye-witness of the things whereof he writes. Without losing sight of the Johannine difficulties, it may be said that a comparative examination of the Gospels often results in a growing respect for the historical accuracy and insight of this writer of what has sometimes been termed the Spiritual Gospel.

3. The task of harmonizing the discrepant accounts of Christ's entrance into and departure from Jericho has always presented grave difficulties. St. Mark represents Him to have healed the blind son of Timæus when He was leaving the city; St. Luke places this miracle in the story of His *entrance into* Jericho; while St. Matthew still further complicates matters by affirming that He healed *two* blind men as He departed. These discrepancies have sometimes been used to impugn the veracity and reliability of the Gospels; but at most they do but prove that these writings ought to be read with critical caution. The evangelists themselves were liable to err, while their materials had very probably become confused in the process of transmission. In this particular instance it seems as if St. Matthew himself had

<sup>1</sup> Rev. D. Smith, *In the Days of His Flesh*, Intro. p. xix.

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been unwittingly led, by a similitude between two instances of miraculous healing of the blind, into a confused reduplication.<sup>1</sup> St. Luke has placed on record his own methods of patient investigation; and without minimizing the authority of the Marcan narrative, with its graphic realism, we think that the third evangelist places the healing of Bar-Timæus in its correct time-sequence. Having thus decided upon our own treatment of this discrepancy, we are prepared to review the facts relating to Christ's journey to Jericho with the culminating display of His healing power. The Master Himself was not, as we have seen, deluded by the temporary resurgence of popular enthusiasm in Peræa; He had become cognizant of the dread events that were soon to happen. However, as He drew near to Jericho, the crowd around Him resolved itself into a huge procession, and as the rumour ran ahead, the citizens were caught in the contagion of excitement and came out to meet Him. While such a movement intensified Christ's own feeling of spiritual isolation, it fired anew the ambitions of His disciples, and they probably congratulated themselves upon having anticipated, more correctly than He, the attitude of the populace toward Him. We cannot but wonder how they must have looked upon a possible collision with the Roman power. It may be that these untrained bands of Messianists were relying upon some great demonstration of supernatural power. If Moses had led the tribes of Israel out of Egypt, it seemed credible to the disciples and to others that Jesus, who undoubtedly possessed miraculous gifts, would humiliate the Roman soldiery with a display of the power of God. There can be little doubt that imagination ran wild for a time, and the whispered hopes and conjectures of the disciples and friends of Jesus may have threatened an inevitable fulfilment of the course of events outlined by Caiaphas.

4. Jericho, with its foreign buildings and pagan morals, may have been as unattractive to the temper of Jesus as the city of Cæsarea Philippi, and He had probably no intention of remaining there more than a single night. As He came within sight of it there occurred this final instance of His miraculous power of healing, which multiplied the people's excitement tenfold. Being the Passover season, the beggars, who seem in the East to be ubiquitous, were looking forward to their annual harvest of alms,

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Matt. ix. 27 with Matt. xx. 30.



and were lining all the roadsides up to Jerusalem. One of their number, a blind man, the son of Timæus, hearing the confused roar which accompanies the movements of a great crowd, and learning that Jesus of Nazareth was approaching, conceived the strange hope that he might now be healed of his blindness. It is probable that this hope was born of the remembrance of a story about the miraculous restoration of sight in the case of a man at Jerusalem who was born blind. As Jesus approached, therefore, Bar-Timæus shouted, "Son of David! Jesus! Pity me!" This clamorous appeal found no sympathy with the crowd; they callously bade the blind man be silent, but he cried out the more. When Jesus heard, He halted and called for the man. At once the mood of the fickle people changed; they said to the beggar, "Courage: arise; He calls thee." It has been judged superfluous that Jesus should ask what the man wanted, but acquaintance with Eastern beggars would give point to such a question; for not many of them desire the total cure of a disease that excites pity and secures a regular revenue. Bar-Timæus was whole-heartedly explicit in his request, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight." "Go your way," said Jesus; "your faith has saved you." The grateful man at once joined the crowds around Jesus, evoking a chorus of praise as he glorified God. The incident itself betokens a change in the mood of Jesus: hitherto He had rebuked the demoniacs when they acclaimed Him the Messiah, and He had commanded that His disciples should be silent about this title; but now He no longer deprecates the use of the Messianic title, "Son of David." Whether the blind man meant much or little by this name, does not alter the important fact that for Jesus Himself the time for silence had gone; His hour had come. That He made no reference to the title signified an implicit acknowledgement of its fitness, and thus His last miracle virtually verified His Messiahship in the eyes of the people.

5. Rumours of the healing of the man passed with lightning-like rapidity among the crowd, and gave a thrill of increased excitement to Christ's followers. In consequence of the greatness of the throng, one man, Zacchæus, a commissioner of taxes (*ἀρχιτελώνης*) in Jericho, being of small stature, ran ahead of the procession and climbed into a fig-sycamore tree.<sup>1</sup> Jesus may have noticed the little man dodging on the outskirts of the crowd and

<sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 1-10.

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then climbing upon the tree; He appreciated an earnestness that dared to defy propriety; and He may have divined the hidden and better nature of this rich man. When He came to the tree, Jesus stopped, and in cordial, friendly tones said, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down: this day I must abide in your house." Christ's saying about the foxes and birds having their respective dens and nests, while the Son of Man had not where to lay His head, was hardly applicable to this period of revived though short-lived popularity; for in Jericho that afternoon, many doors would have been gladly opened for Him had He desired: but, to the surprise of all around, He invites this oppressive agent of the Roman tax-farmers to become His host. To the strict Jews this repeated instance of Christ's good-will toward persons who were ostracized by the respectable and patriotic classes was an offence; but to us it reveals the large, genial tolerance and ethical optimism of Jesus. Such incidents help us to understand how He came to make the indelible impression of being the greatest of all lovers of humanity. This impression may be wholesomely revived as we enter upon a review of some of the last scenes and dissertations of Jesus, for we have been gradually forced to conceive of Him as a great, strong personality wielding supernatural or extraordinary powers—as one who scarcely disguised an unsurpassable egoism and claim to tremendous authority by His tremulous and gentle pity. There is a danger, however, that in correcting the prevailing conception of the mildness of Jesus, the mind may swing into an unbalanced emphasis upon His self-conscious greatness and masterful self-possession: hence, it is conducive to our impression of the symmetry of His humanity to consider His genial friendliness for Zacchæus. The tax-gatherer was himself startled by His condescension and was caught out of the callosity of mammon-worship and oppressive greed, and lifted into a passion of repentance. The frankness and magnanimous confidence of Jesus awoke his moral nature from its long sleep, and opened the springs of righteousness and truth in his soul. While Jesus was sitting at his table, Zacchæus solemnly announced the resolve to give half of his ill-gotten wealth to the poor, and to requite, with a fourfold reparation, those whom he had defrauded by extortionate demands. Jesus knew probably as much as our modern psychologists know of the potentialities of moral passion and the fine force of idealism hidden in the ordinary man—hidden often by vice and crime—

and sharing the joy of those angels who watch for man's repentance, He gave utterance to a never-forgettable *logion* which follows fitly upon the word about ransom: "Salvation has come to this house today, seeing that he also is a Son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save what has been lost."

6. While we have given ample recognition to the Messianic implication of this self-chosen title, "Son of Man," we have yet found its content to be predominantly human and fraternal rather than official. The description of the special purpose of His mission must be commensurate with the breadth and catholicity of the Name by which Jesus designates Himself; that Name implies that the range of His proposed activity must be coextensive with the race. This definition of the Messiah's function in the world is so strikingly luminous and comprehensive that it harmonizes wholly with our impression of the Personality of Jesus. No mind but His was capable of propounding such sublime soteriology. It is the speech of one who breathes the ampler, purer air of the Spiritual World; and without overweighting it with later dogmas of the Church, it must be acknowledged that it was well-nigh inevitable that men should infer that the Speaker half-implied that He had come into our world from some preëxistent state. Whether this be really so or not, the saying has become the keyword of the mission of the Son of Man: from the beginning to the end it is all of a piece; the unmalleable materials of His human experience are fused into one perfect ministry of seeking and rescuing the lost. Men, some or all of them, seemed to Jesus to be like wandering, silly sheep in perilous places—like lost coin, useless when withdrawn from currency; like the prodigal spending himself in bestial and slavish indulgences, which leave him ever more unsatisfied. Such states have their gradations and, as in Dante's *Inferno*, every deep opens into a yet lower depth. Such a conception may be at variance with the shallow optimism of an age that has almost lost the sense of sin. Externally man's history may present a great upward movement; in the sweep of universal perspective sin appears to the evolutionist a mere shadow, a negation, a temporary missing of the mark. But then the truest passages of human experience can never be understood by an outside view; in all thought, emotion and action we have to reckon the psychological, ethical and personal values. History can only be interpreted from within. The common mistake about evolution arises

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from the assumption that perceptible morphological processes cover the whole of human experience. But since the belief in free-will, even if it be illusory, clings to our minds with such stubbornness, we have to treat the sense of choice as the central cell of personality, and to read life from this inward point of view. The underlying assumption of man's self-conscious activity is that the soul believes itself to be accountable before God. If, then, the attitude of the will to God determines life, sin is not simply a negative thing, a missing of the mark; it is, in its essence, an antagonism to God. Wherever this enmity with God exists, man may be truthfully described as lost. Of "original sin," Pascal says: "Certainly nothing shocks us more than this doctrine; and yet, without this most incomprehensible of all mysteries, we are an unintelligible enigma to ourselves. This is the master-key to the intricacies and perplexities of human existence. So that, however inconceivable this mystery may be, man without it is still more inconceivable." The recluse of Port Royal accepted the verdict of Jesus concerning our moral condition. He says, again: "If man had never become corrupt, he would have enjoyed truth and happiness with certainty; and if a man had always been corrupt, he would have had no idea of truth or of happiness. But unhappy mortals as we are . . . we have the idea of a happiness which we can never reach; there glimmers before us the image of truth, but we grasp falsehood only; we are incapable alike of absolute ignorance and of complete certainty: these are sufficient indications that we were once in a state of perfection, 'or designed for that state, from which we are unhappily fallen.'" <sup>1</sup> An unexpected supporter of this mysterious dogma is found to-day in G. K. Chesterton,<sup>2</sup> who finds in it the only explanation of man's present state, and derives from it the dynamic principle which is to destroy all oppressions and evils. But while many agree with Jesus in His description of man as "lost," He has no rival in His own tremulous sensitiveness to the loss sustained by God; in most of us conscience is only faintly responsive to the reality of its own ethical insights; but Jesus felt the full measure of the loss. In His own gracious speech, just as the shepherd misses the wandering sheep, as the woman grieves for her lost coin, and the father agonized over his son who was a prodigal, so the Son of Man compassionates the "lost" and seeks to save them. In part the nature of the salva-

<sup>1</sup>Pascal's *Thoughts*.

<sup>2</sup>*Orthodoxy*.



tion Jesus gave may be inferred from His treatment of Zacchæus; He evoked the upspringing emotion and urging thought of genuine repentance; He renewed the lost manhood from within, robbing the man of no jot or tittle of freedom and responsibility. Such is the new moral endowment which was to be universalized through the anticipated Cross; by dying for men He made accessible to all the new life which came to Zacchæus.

7. On the morrow—probably on Friday—Jesus bade a final farewell to Jericho, and resumed His fateful journey toward Jerusalem. St. Luke accurately depicts the mood of the followers of Jesus at that time, “they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear.”<sup>1</sup> Those who identify the Parable of the Pounds with that of the Talents, or who suppose that St. Luke misplaces an address given later in St. Matthew,<sup>2</sup> lose by their supposition a great interpretative word of the Master’s thought;—a word which proves to us that Jesus did not misconstrue His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, whatever the disciples anticipated. The third evangelist, however, appears to have mixed together two distinct traditions of resembling parables. Jesus may have had in His thoughts the story of Herod’s visits to Rome when, in spite of the Jewish embassy which was sent to plead against his misdeeds, Augustus granted the kingdom to him.<sup>3</sup> “A certain nobleman,” said Jesus, “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.” It may be that the Creator of the parable said of the nobleman that before departing he distributed ten pounds among ten servants, that they might trade therewith during his absence. Two distinct lines of thought may intersect each other in a teacher’s mind and express themselves in dual but intertwined parables; or they may become mingled in the confused memories of the listeners. The marvel is that we have received such correct reports of so large a part of the teachings of Jesus. The visits of Herod and of Archelaus to Rome become typical in the sayings of our Lord of His anticipated journey or exodus. In the case of Archelaus, “his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us”; this, too, became typical of the remonstrance that the Jews would make to Pilate a week later, “Write not the King of the Jews.” The brief

<sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxiv. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Jos., *Ant.*, xvii., 8, 1-9, 3, 11, 4; *B. J.*, ii., 6.



resurgence of popular feeling in favour of Jesus does not, for a single moment, blur His clear prevision of the unmitigated opposition of the established authorities. The "journey into a far country" is parabolic of the Messiah's approaching exodus; for His death, though marked by outward violence, was freely undertaken by Jesus Himself. Widely different, indeed, from all the disciples' conjectures would be the actual manner in which Jesus would accede to His throne! Still, just as the nobleman returns as the acknowledged king to reward and punish the doings of citizens and servants, so Jesus also was assured that He would come again; and even if this expected *parousia* were exclusively spiritual, it must express itself in the visible course of history. Whether the denunciation and punishment of those in the parable who rejected the nobleman's claim be or be not designedly predictive of the fall of Jerusalem we may find in that disaster a dreadful fulfilment of this parabolic saying.

8. We have already stated that we accept St. John's correction of St. Mark's final *hexameron*, and may proceed on the assumption that, instead of completing the entire journey to Jerusalem in one day Jesus and His disciples halted for the night at Bethany. The Jewish Sabbath being reckoned from evening to evening, it was necessary that He should leave Jericho early on Friday, in order that Bethany might be reached in the afternoon. Allowing for a noonday rest the journey of about sixteen miles would take from six to seven hours. St. John definitely corrects the Marcan tradition that the Supper at Bethany took place only two days before the Passover, stating that it occurred six days before the great feast. "That is apparently," says Dr. Westcott,<sup>1</sup> "on the 8th Nisan. If . . . the Crucifixion took place on the 14th Nisan, and if, which seems to be less certain, that day was a Friday, the date given by St. John falls on the Sabbath. It must then be supposed that the feast took place in the evening after the close of the Sabbath. If the Passion fell on Thursday, for which strong reasons can be adduced, the arrival at Bethany took place on Friday. In this case the Sabbath was kept a day of rest, and followed by the feast. On either supposition the entrance into Jerusalem was made on the Sunday, the next (natural) day." The difficulty about the days is not greater than our perplexity about Simon the leper, who he was, and what relationship he sustained to Christ's well-known

<sup>1</sup>*In loco.*

friends. Some have identified him with the Pharisee-host of the same name; <sup>1</sup> others have regarded him as the father of the sisters and of Lazarus. In this latter case, Jesus may have healed him; or, he being deceased, his son would naturally act as host. Another alternative hypothesis is that Lazarus and his sisters had simply hired the house of Simon the leper for this feast, on the ground that it was more commodious than their own. Passing from this debated point to the question of a resemblance between this and the Lucan story of an anointing of Jesus, we can but express astonishment that any critics have ventured, on such slender data, to identify the penitent woman of the town with Mary of Bethany. There is no trait in Mary's character, no single act or word of hers, to justify the suspicion that her gentle, contemplative spirit had been stained by an immoral life. Next to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, we think of this sister of Lazarus as the very type and symbol of pure, modest womanliness. The *motif* of St. Luke's story is different;—the respective scenes are utterly unlike, the interlocutors are not the same, their criticisms fit into their respective narratives, but cannot be identified by any ingenious reasoning; nor can the parable of the earlier incident be twisted into a eulogy of Mary. But, then, a further perplexity arises from the discrepancies between the accounts of the first two Gospels and the narrative in St. John. The latter states that Mary anointed the Master's feet; the other evangelists affirm that she poured the pure nard over His head. Once again, it can only be suggested that the later writer desired to correct a misconception which had become crystallized in the early tradition of the incident; and this would account for his twice-repeated allusion to the feet of Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

9. However irreconcilable such a discrepancy may be, leaving us to choose one as the alternative of the other, yet following out our impressionist method we are constrained to believe in the substantial genuineness of these two traditions. The evangelists agree in setting forth the exquisite sacrament of personal homage and sacrificing devotion performed by Mary. Lazarus is specially mentioned as being one of the company at the table; but the recorders do not emulate the art of fictionists and unseal his silent lips to satisfy our curiosity. With Jesus Himself were the Twelve, and perhaps other guests. "Then took Mary a pound

<sup>1</sup>Luke vii. 36f.

<sup>2</sup>John xi. 2; xii. 3.

of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Such an act sprang from an imagination fired by great passion; it bespoke the originality of conception born of love; and it was too full of a woman's best grace to be appreciated by coarse selfishness and cold calculation. Yet one feels that the disciples might have cordially approved an act which was the anointing of One they believed to be the Messianic King. For how many of that company, we wonder, was Judas the spokesman, when he objected that the costly gift that had been lavished upon Jesus might have been sold for three hundred *denarii* (about £10), and this sum distributed among the poor? Long years after, in recording this story, the fourth evangelist wrote as though the subsequent history had disclosed the dishonesty of Judas: "Now he said this, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief; and because he pilfered what was put into the purse of which he had charge." For the justification of this charge we know nothing beyond Judas's supreme act of treachery. So far as the other disciples were concerned, such rude ebullition of grudging economy sprang from poverty and from the lack of those refined ardours which swayed Mary's soul. The suggestion that the spikenard had originally been purchased for the brother's grave is not free from objections, although it would account for Mary's possession of the costly unguent. But it may have been that this family at Bethany owned considerable property, so that Mary robbed no one by her splendid extravagance. The Master understood her devotion, and threw over her the shield of his approval to defend her from the uncouth reproach of Judas. "Let her alone! Why molest her? She hath done a beautiful deed for Me. For you have the poor always with you, and whenever you like, you can do them good; but Me you have not always. She hath done what she could; she hath anointed My body in anticipation of the burial.<sup>1</sup> And I tell you truly, wherever the Gospel shall be preached through the whole world, this woman's act shall be also told in remembrance of her."

10. Mary needs no other defence. Three hundred *denarii* distributed among the poor would have been a worthy charity,

<sup>1</sup>Dr. E. A. Abbot has suggested that ἡ may have slipped out after ἀβρίῃ: "or is it your wish that she should keep it for My embalming?"

but it would not have filled the whole world with the perfume of love, as Mary's act has done.<sup>1</sup> It requires the passion and romantic imagination of Francis of Assisi to appreciate this beautiful deed in any adequate way. There is a false economy which advises a penury in devotion on the pretext of almsgiving. Sympathy for the poor, however, did not lead Jesus to lift utility above the instinctive munificence of self-sacrificing love. The spirit of Mary's act made it seem to Jesus as the anointing of His body for the tomb. As, just previously, He had compared Himself to a nobleman going away to receive the gift of a kingdom from his over-lord, so now at the Supper-table He speaks again of death as the mode of His departure. When the disciples were looking for His coronation apart from any dangerous journey, He was anticipating His funeral rites and colouring every passing incident by this His predominant thought. In making Mary's anointing of Himself the preparatory rite of His burial, He spoke as though He foreknew that the circumstances of His death would preclude the customary obsequies. Yet once again He signifies that His decease will not be the end of His cause. As the nobleman came back to claim his kingdom, so would the Messiah come to His inheritance. In harmony with this anticipation of a great future, Jesus now predicts that the demonstration of Mary's love is destined to be declared wherever the Gospel shall be preached. He also perceived that His own body will be broken as the alabaster-box; but when it is shattered the perfume of life—His Gospel—will fill the world. With graphic skill St. Mark draws over against the gracious woman the dark sinister figure of the loveless Judas. Henceforth the shadow of a traitor falls across the pathway of Jesus. Such a man could not breathe freely in the aroma of love; the utter unworldliness of Jesus and Mary precipitated the feelings of discontent and disappointment which had begun with the schism at Capernaum. The woman lavished her love-gift upon her Lord; but Judas, stung into revolt by this futile idealism, went out to plan the darkest act of treachery known in history. "Then Judas of Kerioth, who was one of the Twelve, went off to the high-priests to betray Him to them."

<sup>1</sup> See Stopford Brooke's *Christ in Modern Life*, ser. xviii. art. *Expenditure*.



## CHAPTER II

### THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

I. WHILE we have accepted the Marcan ground-plan of Christ's public work, as outlining the general scheme of the Synoptics, we have not hesitated to treat it elastically, inserting not only the "great interpolation" of St. Luke's gospel, but also the Johannine account of the Judæan ministry. We further modify the chronology of St. Mark by lengthening the duration of Christ's public life; had we only the data supplied by the Synoptic Gospels, we might infer that the ministry lasted little more than one year, but this impression is corrected by St. John, who mentions three different Passovers in the course of our Lord's itineration. A possible method of criticism adopted by men lacking in imagination and sympathetic insight, or endued with philosophical prejudices, is to place the two main traditions—the Synoptic and the Johannine—in bald antagonism so that the credibility of both is undermined at the start. A more effectual and natural method, however, appears to be that which aims at combining scientific attention to detail with a frank impressionism, which seeks for a probable synopsis of events rather than for a mere destruction of the credibility of our witnesses. Having already pointed out the evident intention of the fourth evangelist to supplement and correct the Synoptic tradition, it gives us no shock to find some important incidents entirely omitted from his gospel. But it surprises and pleases the reader to observe that, in spite of such omissions the Fourth Gospel often enables us to see the true order of the events related only by the Synoptists. For example, the earlier evangelists had received and recorded a form of tradition which ran the story of the journey from Jericho to Bethany into the account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, so that in reading their narratives it is easy and natural to fail to observe the sign of an interruption in the journey from Jericho to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Had not St. John, therefore, stated definitely that Jesus remained at Bethany that night, in-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxi. 1; Luke xix. 29.



stead of going on with the other pilgrims to the capital, we should have inferred, from the Marcan narrative, that Jesus pursued His journey to Jerusalem on the same day, and it would have seemed that the triumphal entry ended in an anti-climax—that, having looked around on the temple, Jesus at once returned quietly to Bethany. But when the various traditions are set side by side, an impression is made upon us that St. John's account gives us first-hand impressions and memories of an eye-witness. Jesus, we believe, halted at Bethany and spent one or two nights with His friends in that place, where He was entertained at supper, probably on the evening following the Sabbath, when there occurred the anointing which we have just considered;<sup>1</sup> then, on the following morning (of Palm Sunday), He entered Jerusalem amid the plaudits of an excited throng of pilgrims.

2. We have no account of the manner in which Jesus spent the last Sabbath before His Crucifixion; probably it was passed in quietude and meditation, since He was in great need of rest, physically and mentally. Having come once again into Judæa, He might acquiesce in the ban of excommunication which took away His right to attend the synagogue service. At some time during the evening, Jesus may have privately informed His disciples of His intention of riding into the city the next morning upon an ass; and, if so, they would discuss the significance of this project. It was not the plan of entry that popular imagination had conceived; but then, however lowly the animal of the Master's choice, His deliberate resolve to go in this way at least betokened that a momentous change had come over Him; instead of seeking privacy, He was courting a new kind of publicity. Even Judas, if he heard of this plan, might have bridled his anger, at least for a time, until he saw what would result from this Messianic demonstration through Jerusalem. The disciples had been compelled to abandon the thought that Jesus would resort to the sword in order to subdue the Roman usurpation in Palestine: it might, however, enter into their imaginations that He would put forth His supernatural powers for the overthrow of all enemies and for the restitution of the kingdom. Although it may seem almost unintelligible to us, that the disciples should be absorbed in dreams of power after months of reiterated instruc-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Caspari, *Chron.*, Eng. tr., 217.

tion by Jesus Himself that He was going to Jerusalem to die: still, it is the same gospels which record these detailed anticipations of His Passion that also describe the disciples as impervious to such predictions, and represent them as acting as though Jesus had never breathed a syllable about His approaching end. Is it possible to find any rational interpretation of such singular inconsistency in the same narratives? The answer is that only the historical reality of the same inconsistency in the behaviour of the disciples can explain such contradictions: hence, we are compelled to seek some explanation in the minds of these men to account for their self-delusion. Christ's fore-announcements of His Passion were not, in themselves, so unintelligible; but it would seem that the disciples resolutely shut out all such thoughts from their minds as incompatible with His Messiahship. It is easy to understand how it came to pass that with this disbelief they refrained from asking Jesus questions upon the matter. Peter and his companions were afraid of incurring another rebuke such as Jesus had spoken in the vicinity of Cæsarea Philippi; but, although silent, these followers were mentally antagonistic to all such predictions. As we have seen, one of the effects of this grave discrepancy between their thoughts and the Master's, was that of occasional alienation from our Lord, even while they loved Him. Hence we find that the only solution of this problem in the Gospels is to believe that they actually reflect the difficulty which agitated the disciples themselves. Certainly no members of the Primitive Church would invent an imaginary estrangement between our Lord and His disciples, so utterly discreditable to the latter. While we dread to adopt those facile evasions of real difficulties in our Gospels, it does appear to us as not psychologically improbable that the disciples were, at this period, cherishing a mood of mingled belief and unbelief; that, while they confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, they rejected His predictions as the delusions of disappointment. Judas alone of the Twelve seems to have been clear-sighted enough to apprehend a probable catastrophe, and he was feeling increasing hostility to One who claimed the title and yet disclaimed the rôle of a Messiah. Prudence dictated the advisability of awaiting the issues of the project to enter Jerusalem in a public though peaceful way; but already he had conceived the malevolent idea of making profit out of His Master's failure.

3. The resuscitation of the popular enthusiasm for Jesus now culminated in a brief hour's triumph, which recalls a passage from the prophecy of Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion! shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold thy King cometh unto thee; vindicated and victorious, meek and riding upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass."<sup>1</sup> Probably few incidents in Christ's Ministry give more surprise than this of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem; it betrays Christ's abandon of all His accustomed reserve; and to many it savours of a histrionic device for bringing about an apparent fulfilment of ancient prophecy, which seems incongruous with our impression of Him. Something in the retrospective recital of this event—in its tone and colour—may be due to the early habit of tracing correspondence between the oracles of the Old Testament and the events of Christ's life. The fourth evangelist plainly states that His followers did not at once understand the significance of these correspondences; to quote his words, "His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was exalted, then they remembered that these things had been written *of Him*, and that they had acted thus to Him."<sup>2</sup> Such appears to be a fair account of one of the processes of thought concerning Jesus which went on in the Apostolic Church. The remembrance of Old Testament prophecies did not create imaginary incidents in the traditions of His life; but, on the other hand, the incidents which had actually occurred recalled in subsequent reflection prophetic and literary anticipations distributed throughout the ancient Scriptures. And yet when once the tendency to seek for such analogies had arisen, it became inevitable that it should result in an exaggeration of resemblances, and also that sometimes *correspondences* would be imagined where they did not really exist. The evangelist known to us as St. Matthew evinces a strong liking for such supposed prophetic quotations, some of which are exquisitely apt and beautiful, while others seem forced and mechanical. An instance of the Evangelist's felicitous use of the Old Testament is found in his application to Jesus of the Isaianic sentence, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases"; while an illustration of the tendency to force unreal parallels is found in the second chapter, when he quotes as prophetic the ambiguous saying, "He shall be called a Nazarene." In St. Matthew's application of Zechariah's oracle as something

<sup>1</sup> Zech. ix. 9, Prof. G. A. Smith's trans. .

<sup>2</sup> John xii. 16.

fulfilled in Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, we have an interesting though unconscious disclosure of the moulding influence of this preconception that such correspondences are an important part of Revelation. For instance, the second and third evangelists<sup>1</sup> mention, in this connection, only "the colt" (πῶλον), as though they sought to evade the ridicule which the mention of an ass would excite among Gentiles; but St. Matthew, writing under the influence of Zechariah's word of prophecy, states boldly that the disciples brought "the ass and the colt, and put *on them* their garments, and he sat on them." One is not astonished that Strauss should have found in this a provocation of satire and ridicule.<sup>2</sup> It can only be supposed that the mistake sprang out of the Evangelist's negligence of the law of parallelism in Hebrew poetry, which made him construe the rhythmic refrain as the prophet's allusion to a second animal. "Meek and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the she ass's foal." More serious, however, than such a lapse or misinterpretation is the Evangelist's assumption that what appeared in prophecy must have reappeared in the actual career of Jesus. It would, however, be a repetition of a like arbitrary and ill-judged reasoning, if from this error we inferred that there were no *correspondences* at all. Such a deduction is as fallacious as that sometimes made from the fact that analogies may be traced between the Gospels and the myths of Hercules, Perseus and Cadmus—that such parallels prove the Gospels to be fictitious and historically worthless. We have to remind ourselves once more, that there is no such short and easy method of dealing with ancient narratives; that, in treating the New Testament, each book, each incident, must be weighed and judged on its own merits, and on the evidences forthcoming. In like manner each supposed fulfilment of prophecy in the life of Jesus must be treated on the ground of its intrinsic probabilities and on circumstantial evidence. In relation to the general question of correspondences, we recall the statement of St. Luke concerning the risen Christ: "These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and the prophets, and the psalms concerning Me. Then opened He their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures; and He said unto them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ

<sup>1</sup> Mark xi. 7; Luke xix. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Strauss, *The Life of Jesus*, pt. ii., chap. x., p. 110.



should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day, etc.'”<sup>1</sup>

4. Whatever antipathy may be cherished toward such correspondences in general, when we turn our attention to this particular instance—Christ’s public entrance into the capital City—we cannot fail to feel the inherent probability of some such demonstration in the historic development of events at this concluding stage of His Ministry. It fits into the natural sequence of those memorable occurrences of the last week; it constitutes a fitting final appeal to the conscience and spirit of the Jews of Jerusalem; it precipitates the hostile action of the national representatives; and the event itself is one of those large, striking unforgettable things in a history which could hardly be distorted in any report of it, and which would meet with public refutation if, not having occurred, it were a fictitious invention interpolated into the oral tradition of Christ’s life. Any suggestion that He deliberately planned a scene to fulfil a remembered prophecy causes a sense of shock, as something morally questionable; it is incongruous with our first general impression of His character. While, however, we have found His Ministry utterly void of the spirit of intrigue, we have not found it to be without plan and designed order in its development. The public life of Christ is characterized by the spontaneity, freshness and childlike guilelessness of a preëminently pure personality. But while free of all dark designs and cold, political calculations, there can be little doubt that He cherished definite plans and aims. He actually claimed, at first implicitly and then articulately and unmistakably, to be God’s Anointed—i.e. the Messiah; and there can be no doubt, both in this conception itself and in the functions of His office, that He was very materially influenced by the spiritual teaching of the Old Testament. But there was nothing of the slavish literalism of rabbinical pedantry in His treatment of the Scriptures; in Christ’s Ministry, hermeneutics proved to be a spiritual science of wondrous breadth and liberty. No part of His previous teaching prepares one to suspect that He would emphasize minute correspondences between His Ministry and the forecasts of the prophets. Not upon such flimsy “proofs” did He ever base His Messianic convictions, but the consciousness that He was called of God for a mighty work was suffused with large

<sup>1</sup>Luke xxiv. 45, 46.



thoughts and unique filial intimacy with the Heavenly Father. The correspondences Christ realized in His thoughts were not matters of trifling externality, or of petty detail; but rather of those grand ideals of truth which had been present, in varying grades of clearness, in the intuitions of all His Spiritual forerunners. The wish of many readers to evade an impression that He Himself mechanically adjusted His actions to fit in with prophecy, has led them to imagine that He was weary, and that under the guidance of self-preserving instinct often exhibited in Nature, He may have sought to save up His strength in order to face the exhausting experiences of a later day. This fancy is little more than an artifice for self-deception; for reflection reminds us that Jesus knew Zechariah's prophecy too well to have been unconscious of the correspondence of His own action with the description of the Advent of the Prince of Peace. It certainly does not fall in with our impression of Jesus to say that He did this thing in a fit of absent-mindedness under the prompting of fatigue.

5. The explanation which most closely approximates to the truth is that Jesus determined this manner of entrance into Jerusalem in the spirit of one who perceives and loves the innate symbolism of all things. Notwithstanding His Hebrew training, He was Greek-like in the symmetry of His nature: as the title "the Son of Man" implies, His humanity was catholic; and in Him, to the Spirit of prophecy were joined all the fine sensibilities of the artistic temperament. We imagine that, had our world been unmarred by evil and sorrow, the life of the Son of Man would have expressed itself in the form of absolute beauty. The parables of Jesus reveal the artist's power over form as clearly as they show the prophet's spiritual and moral insight. Our reverence for the Person of Jesus ought not to repress all reference to the human gifts of mind He exercised. The prevailing tones of His spoken thought were of ethical elevation, of human feeling and of intellectual clarity; those who listened must have been impressed by the atmosphere of comprehensive wisdom and moral calm which enveloped His thought. But while Jesus often spoke as Wisdom Incarnate, He sometimes delivered Himself as the apocalyptic seer, when His words were vehement with moral passion, boldly picturesque in their imagery, and pregnant with the concentrated thought of an original mind. In what we have al-

ready stated concerning the correspondences between the Old Testament and the facts of His own Ministry, we have touched upon the symbolic trend of His thought. We know of no other who, having read the prophetic delineation of the Messiah—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to those in prison, and to give sight to the blind,"—and, having felt the whole meaning of such symbolic language, would have ventured to declare of himself, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." To the Mind of Jesus all Nature was vocal of the glory and goodness of the Heavenly Father; the flying birds and waving corn-fields, the changeful sky and the affairs of men were all bathed in the translucent atmosphere of religious poetry. The common daily bread was the sacramental symbolism of that immaterial nutriment which God imparts to the souls of His children. Light was to Him neither a corpuscular discharge nor the undulations of a mysterious ether; it was the image of spiritual luminosity which the Divine Fountain pours forth in revelation. Such susceptibility to the expression of outward form, and this feeling for the inherent symbolism of Nature, account, we think, for His appropriation of the imagery of Zechariah's famous prophecy of the coming of the King to the daughter of Zion. The horse was the recognized symbol of war; the ass, a symbol of a mission wholly pacific. Hence Jesus resolved to show His claim to be the Prince of Peace by riding into Jerusalem upon an ass. Such a demonstration would be interpreted as Messianic by all who were spiritually prepared; but no one could mistake it for a political or military announcement. The Christ who had uttered His wisdom in gracious parables, who had announced the fall of Satan as lightning from Heaven, now makes His Messianic appeal to Zion in the symbolism of Old Testament prophecy. Riding into the city as the Prince of Peace, Jesus once more combined those strange contraries of lowliness and majesty, reconciling meekness with royalty; making the very humility of His Progress express the glorious egoism of One conscious of being the appointed Messiah.

6. Passing from the interesting problem of the motives and purpose of Jesus to actual history, we surmise that the owner of the ass's colt to whom the disciples applied was a secret

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or an avowed friend. Since it was the first day of the Passover-week, the road would be thronged with pilgrims, and the report that the Galilean Prophet intended to make a public official entry into the city would create intense excitement. The Galilean pilgrims would infer that some great change had appeared in Jesus Himself since He left them months ago; that His idealism and seeming vacillation were giving place to a practical and bold policy of publicly claiming Messianic honour in Jerusalem. It is evident also that the disciples participated in the changed feeling toward Jesus, whether because of something He had said in regard to this demonstration, or in spite of His predictions of a coming catastrophe, we know not; but a new reverence appears in their relation to Him; they place a cloak over the foal, while others throw their garments in the road as a carpet for the beast He rode upon. The enthusiasm spread, and the people are represented as having strewn His path with branches of trees, while others came from the city bearing fronds of palm in their hands. With carping criticism some have ridiculed the idea of spreading branches in the road as offering incredible obstructions and dangers; and yet the orthodox custom in Russia, in funeral processions, is to spread the route with branches of fir. As a matter of fact, this detail in the narrative has the verisimilitude which can only be given by historic truth, or by artistic skill. Upon the excited throngs there fell again the power of Christ's personality; and as the contagion of enthusiasm spread, the people acclaimed Jesus as Messiah.

“Hosanna!

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the kingdom that comes, our father David's kingdom!

Hosanna in the highest!”<sup>1</sup>

7. Even before they had reached the brow of the hill, some of the Pharisees, annoyed by the abandon of popular feeling, murmured that Jesus was inciting the people to a new profanity. “Teacher,” they said, “rebuke Thy disciples.” “If they should be silent,” answered Jesus, “the stones will cry out.” However limited and defective the disciples' actual understanding of the aims of their Master, at least they showed a moral susceptibility to the inherent grandeur of His personality. It is not impossible that the three who had witnessed His Transfiguration had dropped incidental hints of the glory they had seen, and if so, the vague

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxviii. 25, 26; St. Luke substitutes *δόξα* for Hosanna.

rumours of that Mountain Revelation would excite a mood of intense expectancy. As Jesus entered the capital the walls echoed the shouts of acclamation, and to all who favoured His cause it seemed as though He were about to win the City of Zion. All their inherited dreams and hopes of national greatness flamed up into one brief hour of passionate expression. But the very intensity of the popular excitement made the ineffectual issue of Christ's demonstration seem the clearest revelation of His impotence. Through the obscurity of that day's occurrences it is clear and beyond doubt that the apparent futility of His Messianic manifestation created a cruel disappointment for all the zealots among His followers. It is true that St. Matthew represents Jesus as proceeding at once to cleanse the temple, and states that the "blind and lame people came to Him in the temple, and He healed them"; but this seems a misplacing of events that occurred at different times—some earlier, some later. St. Mark's account probably preserves the true sequence in asserting that the temple-cleansing took place on the following day. The Royal Progress seemed to terminate in a fiasco; all that Jesus did was to enter the sacred precincts and look around with sad, wistful eyes upon the busy scenes of preparation for the Passover.

8. The splendour of the Messianic hope in connection with the work of Jesus died away as swiftly as the glory of a sunset fades on a threatening sky. That last fitful upspringing of national ambition in a belief that Jesus was the Messiah was the natural result of His work in Peræa. The people could not but praise Him for His good works; the miracles of healing which they witnessed kindled their imaginations, and they were ready to attribute to Him all sorts of power and gifts. While the Master never mistook this kind of popularity for spiritual insight, He was touched by such unsophisticated admiration and incipient affection; it was, at least, better than the prejudices, moral apathy and political hostility of the ecclesiastics of His day. It has been conjectured that this final demonstration was the evidence of unrestrained fanaticism in Jesus Himself; but we have seen that really He suffered no illusion to possess His soul for a single hour. He knew that He was stepping on toward His doom. And yet His love for the city of His ancestors clothed itself in this prophetic symbolism, and caused Him to make His



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last appeal to Jerusalem for recognition of Himself as God's Anointed Son. Like the prophet Jeremiah, He was commissioned to make an appeal which He foreknew would be rejected, to create an opportunity which no one apprehended. But those followers who had acclaimed Him as the Messiah in the morning were chagrined at this disappointing of their hopes; when they saw no stupendous miracle, and looked on Him as He allowed His own movement to flicker out without accomplishing anything great, they were angry with Him, feeling that He had deluded them with the words of an empty dream. At the close of the day, as Jesus Himself returned to Bethany with a little company of thwarted and silent disciples, He must have tasted all the bitterness of failure, even while He believed it was the only way to triumph. The morning and the evening of that day were in painful contrast; He who had gone forth as the Prince of Peace now leaves the city lest the assassin's dagger should intercept His destiny. Jesus was still dominated by the belief that He was appointed to die as a public sacrifice after a trial and rejection of Himself by the established authorities of the nation. "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people." In many ways the prophet Jeremiah is a type of Jesus, and the insight we gain into the experience of the former aids us to understand the tragedy transpiring in the heart of Jesus at this stage of His Ministry. He appealed to Zion without the expectation of response; He made a claim which He foreknew would be refused; He offered a day of grace which He perceived would deepen the terrors of the city's condemnation,—this, we believe, is the inner meaning of the history of that Palm Sunday; it is another step toward the Cross.



## CHAPTER III

### THE PASSING DAY OF GRACE

I. IF ever there be discovered one of the original sources of our Gospels, the Christian Church may acquire such new data as will authoritatively determine the exact sequence of events during the Passion week; but without more chronological data than we now possess, we must be content with probability in place of of the longed-for certitude. Should the research of our scholars bear no such fruit of discovery, the mere uncertainty of the order of events cannot be allowed to blur the indubitable impressions made by our present records. In the previous chapter, we spoke of Jesus returning to Bethany; but it may have been that He spent the night on the Mount of Olives. Whether He sat in the home of Lazarus, or under the open sky, He could not but reflect upon the momentous occurrences of the past day. Recalling once more how the glad "Hosannas" of His followers had left unsoftened the harsh hostility of the Jewish hierarchy, Jesus perceived that Israel had let slip a great and notable opportunity of grace. The citizens of Jerusalem were so stultified in their moral consciousness that they were unaware that the Day of the Lord had come; and through their spiritual unsusceptibility it had changed into a day of judgement. They had not known the time of their visitation. That they should have given no adequate recognition of Jesus as the Prince of Peace may be pardonable; but that they rejected Him even as a prophet can only be accounted for by a prior repudiation of the Divine Presence from their lives. In the classic fable, Apollo was unrecognized but not rejected by Admetus; by his gracious reception of the unknown visitor the hospitable man ensured for his own house a divine and beneficent Providence. Even in its myths and legends, a nation reveals its range and capacity of moral discernment. The spiritual blindness of Jerusalem was demonstrated in its failure to recognize the true Messiah, but the turpitude of its guilt can be gauged from the fact that Jesus was so menaced within its walls that He sought shelter outside the city night after night.

The "authorities" were not only obdurate in their resistance to His teaching, but they secretly fomented murderous intrigues around Him. "I do not wonder at what men suffer," said Ruskin, "but I wonder often at what they lose." The disappointment of the disciples that the day had passed without any of the momentous results anticipated, was but a childish chagrin compared with the prophetic presentiments of doom that filled the Mind of Jesus. He had foreseen this refusal of the Day of Grace; yet now that it had taken place, He felt a mightier grief for the doomed city of Jerusalem than that expressed in the dirges of Jeremiah. Henceforth a sleepless sorrow possessed His soul, and the night-silence would add keener poignancy to His reflections, bringing no relief of forgetfulness.

2. As the second day of the week dawned, Jesus rose and, calling His disciples, retraced His steps to the city. On the way He either gave utterance to a parable which tradition subsequently transformed into a miracle, or He enacted the solemn parabolic miracle of cursing the fruitless fig-tree. The evangelists represent it as an acted parable, and for the present it seems better to presume that they gave a correct account of Christ's prophetic action. They saw shimmering in the beautiful sunrise the pleasant green leaves of a fig-tree: since St. Mark tells us that "this was not the season of figs," we infer that neither Jesus nor His disciples expected to find fruit thereon. In this combination of rich foliage and fruitlessness, Jesus characteristically perceived the symbol of Israel's history; perhaps He recalled His own earlier parable<sup>1</sup> of the husbandman who spared the barren tree at the vine-dresser's pleading; but now He fain would impress upon His disciples that the opportunity for reform had gone, and after the manner of the prophets He cursed the actual tree on the roadside: "Never more let anyone eat fruit of thee!" Surely no sane critic could so misunderstand the Spirit of Jesus as to attribute this act to angry caprice; He spoke not in childish pettishness, but in the spirit of solemn prophecy. St. Matthew affirms that the tree withered immediately; St. Mark, however, states that it was on the following day that Peter observed that the tree was blasted. The supposed answer about the miraculous power of faith reads like an interpolation of something spoken at another time. Placed in its proper connection with the

<sup>1</sup>Luke xiii. 6-9.

thoughts and feelings of Jesus at this stage of His Ministry, the incident, whether looked upon as a spoken or as an acted parable, is prophetic of the doom which would fall alike upon a fruitless nation and upon a self-deceiving disciple.

3. The episode of Christ's lament over the beautiful city which St. Luke makes to interrupt the triumphal procession of Palm Sunday, may have fitly taken place on this following day, when He Himself was overwhelmed with His presentiment of the city's unescapable catastrophe. Had Jerusalem received Him as its Spiritual Messiah in the time of Divine visitation, it might have been saved; but now He saw it threatened with evils that no one could ward off. As He came over the ridge of hills and caught another glimpse of its towers and palaces resplendent in the morning light, the terrible contrast between that outward spectacle and the inner vision upon which He had brooded through the night hours, smote a poignant regret into His patriotic spirit and He sobbed aloud.<sup>1</sup>

"Would that thou hadst known the things that tend to thy peace! Even thou, even at this day!

But now it is hidden from thine eyes—

Because days will come upon thee,

When thine enemies will throw up a palisaded mound round thee, and surround thee,

And besiege thee on every side,

When they will dash thee and thy children within thee to the ground,

When they shall not leave one stone upon another within thee,

Because thou didst not recognize the time of thy visitation."

As Amos had foreseen the Assyrian terror in his day, so Jesus foresaw the avalanche of Roman power which was to destroy the city. This is not surprising; for even Caiaphas had discerned, in a confused way, the true drift and direction of the current of history when he precipitated the policy of the Sanhedrim in relation to Jesus. The day of Israel's opportunity had almost ended, yet even at that eleventh hour a genuine repentance and faith in Jesus might have saved the city of Jerusalem from destruction and prevented the dispersion of the Jews. Like the prophets of the eighth century B.C., Jesus believed in the victorious energy of moral life as more potent than material forces;—by receiving Himself and adopting His teaching, Jerusalem might have been maintained inviolate even against the

<sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 41-44, *ἐκλαυεν*.

invincible legions of Rome. How such a triumph of spiritual power could have been secured, we do not know; but we may assume that the Word of God would have been as signally vindicated and victorious in the days of Cæsar as it had been in those of Sennacherib.

4. The problem whether there were one or two instances of Christ's expulsion of the traders from the temple, and if one, whether it occurred at the beginning or at the end of the ministry, may be the subject of endless debate; but until fresh light is thrown upon the life of Jesus, no certainty can be arrived at. Dr. A. Plummer regards it as reasonably certain that there were two temple-cleansings; but other scholars of high repute have their doubts. Our reiterated belief that St. John designed to correct some of the mistaken inferences occasioned by the Synoptic traditions allows us to admit the possible repetition of this incident. If in this particular case, however, we must regard the Johannine and Marcan "placing" of Christ's bold protest against the profanation of the temple as alternatives, then we acknowledge that it "fits in" most naturally at the conclusion of the ministry. With his accustomed observation of personal traits St. Mark states that on the day of His Triumphal Entry Jesus came to the temple and looked round on everything. What He saw was repugnant to His own ideas of a pure, spiritual religion; and when on the following day He may have witnessed some attempt to defraud one of the worshippers, His indignation burst forth in vehement protest. Dr. Edersheim narrates how Simeon, the grandson of Hillel, once saw a glaring fraud in the temple which provoked him to interfere between a seller and buyer; and by his interference he brought down the price of a pair of doves from a gold denar to half a silver one. To the mind of Jesus, the whole scene—the bartering, with its disputes about exorbitant and oppressive charges, and the confusion and noise as of a cattle market—was offensively discordant with all His conceptions of worship; and, incensed beyond all self-repression by this degradation of the national faith, He sought to purify His Father's House. He could not allow it to seem that He was indifferent to the robbery practised under the ægis of temple privileges in the interests of the priests; He was stirred to the depths with righteous anger. Perceiving that His voice would be drowned in that tumult, Jesus adopted a



new and strange method of cleansing the sanctuary; snatching up some pieces of cord, He plaited them into a whip, and with flaming indignation intrepidly opposed the whole priesthood, driving out the cattle and sellers and upsetting the tables of the money-changers. "Is it not written," He said, taking up the language of Jeremiah, "that My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? And ye have made it a den of thieves?" In this manner He displayed the zeal for Jehovah's House which first began to be felt by Him when He was only twelve years of age. It is impossible to say that Jesus hoped for an immediate and permanent religious reform; but His act was, at least, a rebuke which appealed to the national conscience to throw off the incubus of priestly avarice. Many a patriot who looked at the presence of the Roman soldiers as an intolerable indignity, had endured, without protest, the more awful degradation of priestly tyranny; now to them the daring courage of Jesus' act appealed, and they sympathized with this revival of the Spirit of the Maccabees, although they could not appreciate His estimation of the Romans as instruments of Divine retribution. Jesus smote upon the national conscience; He revolted against the desecration of the House of Prayer, and sought to save the poor from the impositions of an avaricious priesthood. Let those who have confused His habitual meekness with weakness, remember this fiery, passionate protest against a great wrong.

5. "The Jews," i.e. the clergy of that age, were wrathful at this attack upon their privileges, but conscience made them cowards: so that, instead of seeking a swift retaliation, they could but weakly ask for a sign to justify His claim to wield a spiritual authority. "Destroy this temple," answered Jesus, "and in three days I will raise it up." Writing long afterwards, St. John applied this enigmatic saying to the temple of His body; but we find in it a triumphant faith which foresaw the overthrow of the central fane of corrupt Judaism, and yet anticipated the rise of a spiritual temple or Church from the ruins of the old. Renan has treated this ambiguous utterance as a token of "His bad humour against the temple." But whatever the exegesis of this ambiguous *logion*, there can be no mistake in attributing the paradox to Jesus, since it was cited against Him at His trial. The action of Jesus provoked new hopes in the minds of the devout, and, encouraged by these, the youths caught



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up again the refrain which had reverberated through the city on the previous day: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" It was a time of spiritual ferment, and seeing Him strike a blow at the wrongs which had the sanction of an aristocratic priesthood, the people once more expected Him to assume the rôle of the Messianic Reformer. When the offended dignitaries complained that Jesus allowed the juveniles to shout "Hosanna," He asked them, "Have you never read, From the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast fashioned praise?" We scruple to accept, at this juncture, St. Matthew's statement that the lame and blind came to Him in the temple—deeming it a transposition from some other context; and we prefer St. Mark's vaguer affirmation, that He taught the people, as probably more correct. Jesus was deliberately enacting the last part of His Messianic demonstration in Jerusalem, and it appears that the very boldness of what He did and said smote His opponents with a temporary paralysis of will. How utterly changed were the tactics of Jesus from those He formerly pursued! All reticence had passed away; He was explicit and authoritative in Messianic claims, swift and overwhelming in His actions. He threw down the gauntlet before the whole hierarchy, resolved that they should openly acknowledge or reject Him. The Day of Grace is swiftly passing, and Jesus forces His opponents to declare either for, or against Him.

6. The Messiah had already designated the chief priests, scribes and elders as the guilty agents who were destined to deliver Him to be crucified. His present challenge of their official prerogatives could not be passed unheeded; therefore, they once again inquired by what authority He did these things, and further, who gave Him such authority. They could not fail to observe that Jesus became ever more pronounced in His self-assertion; and these men, being the legalized leaders of Judaism, were bound to observe His tremendous pretensions and personal claims. It was the culminating point of the quarrel between prophet and priest—between intuition and pedantry, between rabbinic book-lore and spiritual insight, between the privileges of a caste and the inherent worth of a Great Soul. Those questioners would fain have demonstrated to the people that Jesus was a mere charlatan and pretender. Instead of reiterating His Divine commission, Jesus resolved to show these interrogators that they were blind to reason and dead to conscience.

At the beginning of His Ministry John the Baptist had borne testimony that He was the "Coming One": hence, if they acknowledged John to be a prophet, they ought logically to admit the Messianic claim of Jesus. This link between the first opening scene of Christ's Ministry and His last appeal in the temple, confirms our belief that the final claims of Divine authority made by Jesus in those last days were implicit in His first assumption of public duty. Having incidentally remarked this note of continuous development in His Ministry we must seek to understand why Jesus did not explicitly and directly answer the question about His Divine commission. We must not look upon this scene as a mere encounter of wits, in which Jesus gained a notable victory; it was, surely, more than that. He referred to the Baptism of John as a matter of historic fact with which they were familiar, and as something which turned the moral order of life into a sacrament, for it was the Baptism of Repentance. Jesus knew that it would be sheerest folly to speak of things of highest spirituality to men who were sunk in the delusions of sense; to point to the witness of the Spirit when His questioners were blinded by pride. Whatever may have been the limitations of John's ministry, it had made its primary appeal to conscience and it aimed at righteousness. Now, unless these haughty priests and their allies were ready to admit the facts of the moral world; unless they acknowledged the reality of guilt and man's need of repentance, they could not possibly understand an authority which was essentially built upon these foundations of the moral order of life. Those who cherish a lie in the soul will ever be blind to the reality of spiritual truth. Those members of the Jewish hierarchy were thrown on the horns of a dilemma; they were afraid to deny the prophetic vocation of John, and yet they were resolved not to admit the authority of his Successor. St. Luke affirms that they feared the people would stone them if they maligned John.<sup>1</sup> While in their outward professions the priests and Pharisees paraded their religion before men, in conduct they resembled the son in the parable who promised to work and then wilfully disobeyed. It was the irony of history that the official representatives of religion were apostates by reason of their spiritual hardness, while the excommunicated prodigals became penitent, and the outcasts are brought into

<sup>1</sup> "Timentes lapidationem, sed timentes veritatis confessionem."—THE VEN. BEDE. Inter. Com. Luke xx. 1-8. Plummer.

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God's Reign by moral awakening. The stereotyped ceremonialism of the priests had killed the spirit which first created it. Jesus said to them,<sup>1</sup>

"I tell you truly,  
The tax-gatherers and the harlots go before you into the kingdom of God.  
For John came in the way of uprightness, yet you did not believe him,  
But the tax-gatherers and the harlots believed him;  
And though you saw it, you did not even repent afterwards and believe him."

7. The cycle of parables belonging to this stage of the Ministry of Jesus all bespeak the sorrow He felt at the passing away of the Day of Grace and the approach of Divine Judgement. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Two of these parables, referring to the rejection of God's Son, were spoken on the Monday or Tuesday. The vision of Jesus comprehends the past, present and future, and Israel's history and destiny are set forth with incomparable moral insight and accuracy. The sorrow of Jesus was no narrow vexation of thwarted self-love; it was the agony of the patriot who foresees the ruin of his fatherland; it was the grief a prophet feels at seeing the theocratic race stultify its Divine election. Jesus affirms His own organic, vital relationship with the historic revelation of all the past; He does not stir up some side issue; He Himself is the Son who comes after God's Servants, the prophets. He claims to be the spiritual fruit of that tree which Jehovah planted; in Him, He affirms, the Old Covenant is consummated, and through Him a new race is begun. His prevision of the rejection of Himself by the official representatives of the nation never wavers; this, indeed, will be the climax of Israel's repudiations of the whole series of Divine visitations, and as a consequence a dreadful retribution will swiftly follow. In the parable<sup>2</sup> Jesus uttered, the vineyard is let out to wicked tenants, who, when the over-lord sent for his rent, revolted and put his messengers to shame. At last the owner sends his son to them, thinking that to him, at least, the tenants will show respect. But as soon as the heir arrives those evil-minded men arise and murder him. Although the movement of the parable is compressed into a single season, the drama of history it describes has been going on for centuries. Before His hearers understood the application to

<sup>1</sup> Godet thinks that the parable of the Two Sons is misplaced.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xx. 9-19; Matt. xxi. 33-46; Mark xii, 1-12.

themselves, Jesus asked of them what the owner of the vineyard will do. "He will miserably destroy those bad men," said they; and then, as some perceived His meaning, they quickly exclaimed, "Away with the thought!"<sup>1</sup> They saw that the vineyard was the Church or Israel of God, that the wicked tenants represented successive generations of a priestly caste and of official teachers, and that their living representatives were even now intriguing to slay Jesus, "the beloved Son."<sup>2</sup> St. Mark makes it plain that the angry priests perceived the meaning of this great, sad parable of their nation's history—rejected opportunities and coming doom; and so inflamed was their hatred of the Speaker, they would fain have arrested Him at once, but were afraid of the partisans of Jesus, who had evinced sympathy with His attempt to purge the temple.

8. Jesus also taught that there are checks and limits to the power of God's enemies; and the intended frustration of the Divine Purpose becomes a means for its final accomplishment. His great revealing words cannot be adequately explained in the ordinary perspective of earth; He spoke as one whose vision comprehended two worlds. According to His own view, He was not merely caught in the conflict of human wills; but He believed that He was combating the malignant designs of the devil and of evil spirits. Whether this aspect of His teaching will ultimately be treated as an accidental inheritance of Jewish superstition or as an authoritative and revelatory part of the doctrine of Jesus, cannot be lightly pronounced upon. While there are many thoughtful men who reject the idea of a mighty personal will of evil as an unnecessary hypothesis, there are others who think that the phenomena of human life justify the old Jewish belief in "possession." But, avoiding all academic discussion, we dare not overlook the fact that the belief in demoniacal possession formed one of the factors in the mind of Jesus; He Himself explicitly affirmed that He came to destroy the works of the devil. It is very significant that the highest literary products of genius and imagination are based upon the idea that man's life has cosmic and extra-temporal relationships. The insights of genius approximate closely to the intuitions of prophecy. The Passion of Jesus was no merely passing scene of a marionette play in the squalid politics of Rome's subject province of Judæa;

<sup>1</sup> μὴ γένοιτο.

<sup>2</sup> τὸν υἱὸν μου τὸν ἀγαπητόν.



rather must it be thought of as a mighty drama of the universal conflict between God's righteousness and the world's wrong. Jesus Himself gave a graduated disclosure of the mighty spiritual conflict in which He was engaged, showing first the inevitability of His rejection, the agents who would be involved in His martyrdom, the fitness of such a consummation of the line of sacrifice running all through Jewish history; then accentuating successive aspects of His death as an event involving some mysterious necessity, predestined to issue in spiritual triumph, as of the nature of a ransom for man's emancipation—as His own last mighty act of will for the saving of the lost. And now once more Jesus attempted to impress upon His hearers in the temple the fact of an overruling Power of God which would make even the wills of His enemies subserve the accomplishment of a Divine Work. The high-priests, scribes and Pharisees believed that if they could put Jesus to death, the movement initiated by Him would come to an end. Jesus repels this delusion in His parable of the Rejected Stone.<sup>1</sup> The stone rejected by the builders as unfit for "the extreme sharp edge of the building" is finally chosen to become the "crown of the right angle of the four sides of the square building, protecting and supporting the stately fabric." Thus did Jesus, in view of His own imminent trial, while renewing His solemn anticipations of death, predict for Himself, under the figure of the Rejected Stone, a certain attainment of exaltation and dignity in the great Spiritual Temple of Humanity. Then, with an abrupt turn of speech He represented the corner-stone as falling upon the rejecters in dreadful retribution.

9. A further judgement-parable was drawn from Him as He perceived the murderous wishes of His enemies. Once again Jesus gave renewed emphasis both to His own indestructible consciousness of Royal dignity and to His assurance of Spiritual inheritance after death. Whatever the exact place for His deliverance of this parable of the Marriage Feast, it unmistakably belongs to a time when the hatred of Jesus by the Jewish rulers could neither be concealed nor disguised. The thought of the parable is pregnant with Jesus' Messianic conception of the Kingdom; and one writer suggests that the feast is connected not only with the wedding, but also with the accession of the Son and Heir to the Throne: therefore the refusal of the invited

<sup>1</sup> Luke xx. 17-19, LXX. Ps. cxviii. 22-23, Delitzsch.



guests is not merely discourteous but also disloyal and rebellious. The repeated invitations alluded to in the parable describe the several missions—i.e. of the Baptist, of the Twelve and of the Seventy; but, since the rebels treated the King's messengers with such malignant cruelty, the Sovereign will destroy them and burn their city. Then, in striking words, Jesus adds to the thought of the Divine rejection of the Jews that of the election of other peoples. "The Marriage is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go to the cross-roads, then, and invite as many people as you find to the marriage-feast." The further addition to this parable concerning the guest without the wedding garment may have been spoken by Jesus at another time, for it belongs to an entirely different set of ideas. Strauss identifies it with the parable of the Great Supper, and prefers the Lucan version as more correct.<sup>1</sup> It is possible, however, that, just as Jesus repeated, in word or act, His earlier parable of the fig-tree in these days, so He may likewise have deliberately taken up one of His well-known parables of grace, and by a new turn of speech made it a message of doom to those men who scorn the overtures of God's mercy. If so, He also extended its application to declare that there will be no lack of guests at the Marriage Feast, signifying that the Kingdom of God will not be abandoned though the Jews, the first invited, cut themselves off by rebellion.

10. Thus, in the Mind of Jesus, the passing of Israel's Day of Grace heralded the ingathering of the Gentiles. As we read this cycle of Judgement-parables, we are amazed at the world-wide compass of Christ's vision, and affected by the deep pathos of the swift alternations of His sorrow and hope. Again, it may be reiterated that these marvellous utterances are a message not only to Israel, but to the whole world. "In Him do the Gentiles hope;" or, as the prediction runs in Hebrew, "the isles shall wait for His law." Jesus makes us think of Himself as the centre of all human history; all the movements of past millenniums converge upon His sacrifice; and, according to His anticipation, from His Cross will radiate new moral energies that shall achieve the triumph of God's Reign on the earth. At that moment of His Ministry the heart of Jesus was full of a patriotic sorrow, and yet He foresaw that the temporary defeat of the

<sup>1</sup>Luke xiv. 15-24.

Divine Counsel in the world will issue in assured triumph. Jesus was caught in the swellings of the Jordan; and yet though death confronted Him, He made no effort to escape, believing that His death itself would secure the conquest of the world for His Father. We do not wonder that those critics who start with the presupposition that Jesus could not be different from ordinary men, should be driven to hint that at this stage He lost His mental balance. There is a colossal egoism in these parables; He set Himself forth as the *end* of the law and the prophets; the previous messengers from God are presented under the figure of slaves, while Jesus is the beloved Son. Yet what marvellous intellectual power He exhibited at this juncture, summing up, in a series of pictorial parables, the whole sweep of Israel's past—throwing out deep suggestions of a new world-wide evangel for the future! If in the Fourth Gospel men may find "the supreme and classical product" of religious philosophy, yet this philosophy of History and Revelation is first found in the Consciousness of Jesus which the Synoptic Gospels reflect for us in these parables of the Passion-week. Instead of first foisting upon the Gospels a naturalistic presumption of what Jesus ought to have been, it is far wiser to allow Him to make His own noble great impression upon our minds by taking cognizance of all the data of His Ministry. Those who assume that the epistolary New Testament conception of Christ must be the baseless fabric of a dream, and set out to restrict the Ministry of Jesus to the brief span of three years, can retain this view only by doing violence to the data of the Gospels, and refusing to accept these parables of Judgement and evangelic hopes.

## CHAPTER IV

### ATTACK AND COUNTER-ATTACK

1. ONE of the difficulties encountered in any attempt to portray the Ministry of Jesus is to preserve the balance between His autonomy and His subordination to the operation of ordinary forces. Although an unbiassed study of the Gospels convinces us that there was in Him some transcendent quality or nature that men have called Divine, we are also bound to acknowledge His submission to the natural conditions and limitations of human experience. From the point of view of His autonomy, we look upon Christ's death as a Sacrifice replete with ethical and spiritual values, but regarding Him as the subject of natural laws, environed by an historical order, we are led to view His Suffering and Crucifixion as the inevitable result of His conflict with the Jewish hierarchy. These two aspects of human experience are so far from being incompatible, that they meet us at every turn in the study of the phenomena of man's life. It is an instance of what Kant termed the third antinomy of Pure Reason, and which he stated thus: "*Thesis*—Causality, according to the laws of Nature, is not the only causality from which all the phenomena of the world can be derived. A causality of freedom is also necessary to account fully for these phenomena." "*Antithesis*,—There is no freedom, but all that comes to be in the world happens solely in accordance with laws of Nature."<sup>1</sup> The true solution of this antinomy will not be found in an exclusion of thesis or of antithesis; it must be sought in reconciliation of both through some conception of man which comprehends his sensuous state and his inward intelligence or spiritual nature. Applying this rule to the Ministry of Jesus, we must give full heed to His self-determining intelligence, and at the same time observe Him as the Object of a natural historical order. In following this latter method first, we shall by no means exclude from our reflection that other view of Jesus without which there would have been neither a Church nor a Christology. We shall show,

<sup>1</sup> *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Dial., bk. ii.

therefore, first that the development of the final stage of Christ's Ministry was outwardly determined by the attacks made upon Jesus by the legitimate leaders of the nation. These authorities saw that the time had come when they must either extinguish the movement of Jesus or be themselves extinguished. He was undermining their authority. Either they must acknowledge Him to be the Divinely Anointed One whom the prophets had anticipated, or they must begin to overthrow Him by discrediting His Ministry in the eyes of the people. Although two or three of the Sanhedrists secretly favoured the claims of Jesus, the overwhelming majority of the Council proudly and scornfully rejected them. Their conduct reveals the triumph of caste prejudices, and is the most flagrant instance of the blindness of orthodox Israel to the self-attesting splendour of the realized moral ideal. The very privileges of their positions, wealth and learning, created a disturbing bias against Jesus, or surely they must have been constrained to have confessed, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

2. St. Luke relates that during those last few days, Jesus evening by evening went away from the temple to spend the night on the hill called "the Olive Orchard." Such daily withdrawals of His presence may have been dictated by prudence; for not only was assassination possible on the part of His enemies, but there was also the danger lest His own friends might, under cover of darkness, encourage some conspiracy against the established government. A merely political demagogue would have acted very differently, but Jesus kept steadily before Himself the exclusively spiritual nature of His mission. We cannot but think that the sad, silent hours of those last nights were spent by Him in prayer and meditation. The strain of the struggle going on was intense and exhausting, and it was needful that His wasted energies should be repaired by spiritual communion. How much or how little of the time was spent in sleep, we have no means of determining; we only know that the days were crowded with incidents which drew forth the final, solemn teachings recorded of this ministry. It might have been supposed that the last remembered transpirings of Christ's fleshly life would have been clearly assigned to the several days; yet, as it is, we are uncertain of the chronological sequence of the events that happened between Monday morning and Thursday night—so uncer-

tain, indeed, that we cannot determine whether Tuesday or Wednesday was the final day of His public activity in Jerusalem. St. Luke says that He taught in the temple day by day, and that the high-priests, scribes and leading men of the people would fain have destroyed Him, but knew not how to accomplish their desire. Early in the mornings, all the people used to resort to Him in the temple to listen to His words, and they would hang upon His lips as men entranced.<sup>1</sup> St. John, however, is the only one of the four evangelists who has preserved the gist of our Lord's last public utterances in the temple; and, from his brief digest of the teachings of those concluding days, we learn that Jesus summed up and asserted His Messianic claims and His warnings against the sin of rejecting them. Again, Jesus reiterated His Divine commission and His moral oneness with the Father, whom He revealed; He claims that His Ministry is a Light come into the world; they, therefore, who reject His word will be judged by it in the last day; but they who believe on Him will not abide in a state of moral darkness, but will receive eternal life.<sup>2</sup>

3. The leading members of the Sanhedrim were genuinely alarmed, for at first it seemed as though the people were in sympathy with Jesus; and under the excitement of His Presence they might use the feast as an opportunity of insurrection; and, if such were the case, the Romans would once more make a riot an occasion for another indiscriminate slaughter of the Jews. It may have been on Tuesday that the enemies of Jesus, having consulted together, agreed to waive all their mutual antagonisms, that they might unitedly attack Him and subvert His influence. Hence we find a formidable alliance<sup>3</sup> between the Herodians and the Pharisees, which had been already foreshadowed during the later Galilean ministry;—an alliance, that is, between the aristocratic families who favoured the Roman supremacy and the strict sect of Pharisees who were rigorous separatists from all Gentiles, as also from all who were lax in their adherence to Judaism. Such a truce between these rival orders serves to disclose the intensity of their hatred of Jesus. Fearing, however, to arrest their common enemy because of His influence upon the assembled pilgrims, these Jews formed schemes to entrap Him either into making some treasonable statement in regard to

<sup>1</sup> Luke xix. 48; xxi. 37.

<sup>2</sup> John xii. 44-50.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xii. 13-17; Matt. xxii. 15-22; Luke xx. 19-26.



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Cæsar's suzerainty, or, if He avoided this danger, to make His fear of treason appear before the people as an unpatriotic repudiation of all hope of national restitution. In this collusion and subtle intrigue, we almost fancy that there can once again be detected the guiding craft of Caiaphas, who thought that at last Jesus might be sacrificed to the jealous vigilance of Rome. Whatever hypocrisy or diplomacy may have lurked in their flattering address, this deputation of Pharisees and Herodians gave explicit acknowledgement of the fact that Jesus was known by all to be absolutely upright—a dangerous admission to make, even insincerely,—of One whose overthrow they designed. "Teacher, we know that Thou art truthful, caring not for anyone (for Thou regardest not the person of men), but teachest the way of God with truth." Men could utter such words as these only of one whose character was known to be above reproach; that they addressed Him thus only to cloak their malignancy, in nowise detracts from the cogency of such inadvertent testimony, although it condemned themselves as the guileful opponents of righteousness. "Is it right," they asked, "to pay tribute to Cæsar or not? Ought we to pay, or ought we not?" With marvellous directness of insight Jesus at once penetrated their malevolent purpose, and saw the respective difficulties involved in either a negative or an affirmative answer. "Why make trial of Me?" He said. "Bring me a denarius, that I may see it." Taking a coin that was proffered, He said, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They answered, "Cæsar's." "Then," said Jesus, "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." The retort given by Jesus gave no settlement of a most vexatious and pressing political problem; but although skilfully evasive of particulars in a matter wherein one whisper of treason would have ruined forever the prospects of His Church, it enunciated a far-reaching principle that every man ought to discharge all known duties of citizenship and of religion. Jesus simply exercised the caution that the most patriotic Pharisee would have shown in refusing to pronounce any judgement upon the grievance of Cæsar's usurping dominance in Palestine. He pointed out simply that the image and superscription of Tiberius upon the denarius was itself proof that Cæsar was *de facto* the ruler to whom tribute must be paid; but He refrained from all expression of opinion about Cæsar's right to rule. The second part of Jesus' reply was not so irrelevant as it may have sounded

to unprepared ears; it expressed His view that religion is concentric with all earthly obligations of man's relationships, comprehending all lower duties under the supreme rule of fidelity to God. Thus once again, as before—Jesus had refused to arbitrate between two brothers in their dispute about an inheritance—He rejects all political interpretations of His claim to be the Messiah. It is often made a complaint against Him today that His teaching offers no aid in solving the political, economic and social problems which press upon us; yet we see clearly that, had He dealt with the actual tyrannies and wrongs of a particular age and people instead of simply laying down the broad principles which relate to the inward spirit of man's life, He could not have been the Teacher and Consoler of all ages. In this attempt to entrap Him in His speech, He calmly and skilfully extricated Himself from a dangerous dilemma, and while He baffled the hatred of His allied foes, He forced upon them the thought that they were not fulfilling their duties to God.

4. Out of slight hints and probabilities offered incidentally by the evangelists, we have to reconstruct a mental picture of Christ's Ministry in the temple during the Passion-week. Not only did all the people resort to Him in the early mornings, but the Sanhedrists, as representing the essential ideas and authority of contemporary Judaism, visited him—"watching their chance (they) despatched spies, who posed as upright men, to lay hold of what He said." The temple courts were crowded with pilgrims who represented the best religious life of the cities and families throughout the Jewish world, and Jesus may have sat or stood "in the gate of the Lord's house" at the entrance of the inner court. It was no ordinary scene; the audience was composed of worshippers, among whom were little groups of Jesus' enemies; and the Speaker Himself was a striking and impressive personality, who was looked upon by the people as a great prophet; by the disciples as the true Messiah, by His foes as a mere pretender. When men are incubating some wicked plot it would seem as though malignant influences are ever ready to pour in from some sphere outside human control. Macbeth meets the witches on the heath; these weird sisters would have remained unperceived, had not his own brain been made ready to receive their evil suggestions by his own over-vaulting ambition. The enemies of Christ were plotting against Him when the material of an ironical

temptation was put into their hands, as it were, by a case which came before a committee of the Sanhedrim probably at that time. A woman taken in the sin of adultery had been brought before the council for judgement; and one of the members satirically advised that, since the Nazarene Teacher had dared to say that even harlots should go into the Kingdom of Heaven before the Scribes and Pharisees, He should be asked to pronounce judgement upon the woman. While the exact time of this occurrence cannot be fixed, there is little doubt that it was among the closing scenes of Christ's Ministry. Godet, who regarded the story<sup>1</sup> as due to an editorial introduction of one of the extra-scriptural facts preserved by the oral tradition of primitive times, remarks that "its internal characteristics place it chronologically at the same epoch as other similar facts related by the Synopists—viz. immediately after the Triumphal Entry. Before that day, we can hardly understand so explicit a recognition of the authority of Jesus on the part of the Sanhedrim."<sup>2</sup> Those who feel so inclined may reject this narrative as lacking in documentary support, and may have the critic's justification of balanced caution; but, for ourselves, judging this interpolation found in St. John by our test of impressionism, we perceive in it a correspondence with the occasion—a possible satire intended by referring such a case to Jesus—and a certain self-evidencing quality in the action and words of the Master and their effect upon others.

5. We pass from the questions of authenticity and inherent probability to the scene described but misplaced in St. John's gospel. While Jesus stood in the midst of the throng teaching them, a sudden thrill of excitement touched the people as a few grave counsellors led a shrinking, shame-stricken woman up to Him and said, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What sayest Thou, then?" They referred this case to Jesus with mock recognition of His authority, and yet even in doing so they once again gave acknowledgement of the profound impression He had made upon them. The position in which Jesus was placed before the people was one of difficulty; He had been known to make the public claim to be the "Friend of sinners": but for Him to waive the Mosaic law as inapplicable would be seeming to do despite to Moses;<sup>3</sup> while,

<sup>1</sup> John vii. 53-viii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Godet, *St. John's Gospel*, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xxii. 23f.

on the other hand, to enforce the old Hebrew law, would place Him in antagonism to the Roman authority. Jesus "bent down and began to write with His finger on the ground." "The scraping or drawing on the ground with a stick or the finger has been in many countries a common expression of deliberate silence or embarrassment."<sup>1</sup> No one can penetrate into the feelings of Jesus at that moment; He may, indeed, have stooped to hide His embarrassment, feeling an utter detestation of the indelicacy of those coarse-grained men. Although His own snow-white soul had never been shadowed by a passing thought of lust, He knew what was in man's heart, and therefore felt an infinite pity for this poor victim of unclean desire. Perhaps He paused awhile to steady His own Soul after the first shock of sympathy, lest His voice should break in sobs. The scribes, however, afraid lest His silence signified that He would refuse to answer, went on asking for His judgement. At length Jesus raised Himself up and answered in calm, stern tones, as He looked around upon the heartless accusers: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." The hubbub around Him ceased; His words were as a flash of lightning ripping up the dark secrets of their inmost thoughts, and as He stooped once more to scribble on the ground, those self-convicted men slunk away "beginning with the eldest, and He was left alone with the woman." It ought not to be inferred that those scribes were men of licentious habits; but, in the presence of absolute innocence, their poor respectability seemed little better than the woman's guilt. Jesus voiced the judgement of an immaculate conscience, and His words seemed to strip them naked, leaving their secret thoughts and desires exposed in the fire of Divine holiness. One of the most impressive attributes of Jesus was His purity<sup>2</sup>; because of this His words pierce men through the heart with a sense of guilt, and they voluntarily echo Simon's cry, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" When He lifted up His head again Jesus saw the wretched woman standing there, unable to withdraw till He had set her free, and said, "Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee?" "No one, Sir." "Neither do I condemn thee. Go thy way: henceforth sin no more." This clemency must not be confused with laxity; Jesus refused to condemn because He saw that shame had burnt into

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Dods in *Expos. N. T.* John viii. 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> St. John iii. 3, *ἀργεία*, a virgin purity, chastity of soul.



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the adulteress's soul, and because, it may well be, He perceived that words of censure would harden and freeze up the little vein of penitence that had begun to trickle in her heart. There is an opening here for the criticism that Jesus gives no aid to the social reformer in battling against the sexual impurities which scourge our cities: hence, although we share in some measure in the pity He expressed for the victims of lust, we glean from His treatment of this case no guidance for dealing with this gigantic wrong. But then, what rules would avail to withstand the momentum of this great elemental passion in the lives of men? At least, Jesus shows respectable moralists that it is futile to condemn the woman while her paramour escapes; that the source of this social impurity lies in the unclean thoughts in the hearts of men.

6. Surprised, chagrined, and resentful at Christ's facile evasion of the net they had spread for Him, the Herodians fell back, so that the representatives of an "older orthodoxy" might seek to confound the Nazarene. St. Luke affirms that "the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor Spirit":<sup>1</sup> Josephus says of the same sect, "They take away also the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades."<sup>2</sup> Some of the members of this Sadducean sect came to Jesus, haughtily scornful of the rabbinical pretensions of this Galilean peasant, and resolved that they would humiliate Him, even in the eyes of those who were deluded by Him. Although Jesus had made it no special object to teach the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, He had throughout His Ministry assumed the truth of these doctrines, and had necessarily alluded to them as certainties of the Spiritual life. He was no systematic theologian or philosopher; His greatest contribution both to ethics and to Revelation was His own personality and life; perhaps, apart from the authority imparted by His character, the teaching of Jesus would not excel, so greatly as we sometimes imagine, the noble, spiritual philosophy of Plato, although the latter is more mixed up with the corrupted opinions belonging to contemporary thought. Treatises may be written on the *Sayings* of Jesus; yet profound and beautiful as these are, and rightly prized as the sacred deposit of the Church, still they are fragmentary and based at times on uncertified reminiscences;

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxiii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish War*, ii., 8, 14.



and, in order to extract their full flavour and significance, we must connect them in reflection with our impression of Jesus Himself. "It is the Lord Jesus and not His sayings, that was the subject of the earliest preachers of Christianity. Doubtless part of the personal impression included a vivid sense of our Lord's guiding principles of life, His daily and hourly intercourse with His Father in Heaven, and the sureness and authority which this Heavenly intercourse gave Him in discerning right and wrong."<sup>1</sup> Such is our impression of our Lord, that we find it impossible to separate His words altogether from His acts; both together serve to reflect His mind and to disclose His unique Person.

7. The Sadducees<sup>2</sup> laid before Jesus a hypothetic instance of Levirate practice—a woman marries in succession seven brothers, who all die without issue—and based upon this almost impossible and ridiculous imagination the question, "Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection life?" Their Pharisaic allies must have felt somewhat uncomfortable at this treatment of their cherished belief, as though it were an absurd jest; yet they raised no protest, since it was designed to nonplus Jesus, whom they hated. Many teachers might have refused to enter upon an idle controversy with no real relevance to the facts of life; but Jesus took up the question and lifted the whole discussion to the high level of His own habitual thought. "Surely you err," He said, "because you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God: when the dead rise, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven. And concerning the raising of the dead, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the section of the Bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'" This argument does not derive its cogency from the use of the present tense,<sup>3</sup> for its intrinsic value lay in the conception of God's relation with men cherished and taught by Jesus. Neither in the Hebrew text nor in the Septuagint version, nor in our Lord's quotation, was a verb employed, although it is demanded to complete the English idiom. Professor H. B. Swete remarks that "In this place God reveals Himself as standing in a

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxii. 23-33.

<sup>3</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἐπέειπεν, Ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' εἰμί.

real relation to men who were long dead. But the living God cannot be in relation with any who have ceased to exist; therefore, the patriarchs were still living in His sight at the time of the Exodus." The mind of Jesus passed far beyond the earth-born doubts of the Sadducees and the pedantry of the scribes, and this thought He has given the world becomes ever more replete with force and meaning as we learn to know the reality of our Divine relationship. Such an argument as this flashes upon us a light of revelation as transcendent and self-evident as that flung first from Horeb's Bush. It unveils the personal intimacy of Jesus with the Father in Heaven. Immortality is assured by our knowledge of the spiritual and personal relations existing between God and the Soul. When Christ's exegesis brings such an intuition as this, it compels us to think that we too are ignorant of the Scriptures. Our Lord authoritatively declares that when the dead arise they do not resume the forms and habits of earthly life, but enter upon an angelic state in Heaven. He does not argue that there will be a resurrection; He simply affirms the continuity of man's personal life in God: physical death is but an incident in the soul's experience as it passes to fuller intimacy with God. At His words, the shadowy existence of Sheol is transformed into the warm, full life of abiding personal relationship with God.

8. Although the Pharisees must have approved this remarkable vindication of their belief in life hereafter, yet they grudged that Jesus should have the victory. They wished to undermine His authority, and would not allow their momentary agreement with Him to thwart the plan of attack that had been arranged by their enemies. Still, we cannot but imagine that far less malignancy was betrayed by the scribe who put the next question to Jesus, "Which is the first commandment?"<sup>1</sup> Although they failed to appreciate the fact, yet the double quotation from the Law made by Jesus virtually expressed in felicitous and accurate speech the whole character of His Ministry among them. "The first is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these." "The first of these two laws was written on phylacteries, and the Jews recited it morn-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 34-40; Mark xii. 28-33.

ing and evening (Deut. vi. 4; xi. 13); hence, it was the natural answer." The second is quoted from Lev. xix. 18. Jesus quoted the Levitical rule of love to one's neighbour in conjunction with the law that man should love God absolutely, in order to show that true humanity is practical religion; that the love of God can never be accompanied by any fanatical neglect of men's social obligations. In the balanced ethic of Christ's teaching there is no divorce between religion and daily life; this great Rabbi of the Kingdom of God was free of all taint of "other-worldliness." It is true He laid supreme emphasis upon the fulfilment of all duties springing from man's relations to God, but He made it clear forever that the truest Divinity is humanitarian. The love He inculcates cannot ignore a man's neighbours; the Divine Fatherhood He revealed implied an ethical brotherhood; religion must involve some form of socialism. Even His inquisitor was swept out of his pedantry into a warm, ingenuous outburst of admiration; hearing which, Jesus pronounced him to be not far from the Kingdom.

9. Even the enemies of Jesus must have manifested surprise as well as vexation at the penetrating sagacity of this Teacher who had never studied letters. He was irresistible in dialectic; His common speech betrayed a habit of profound reflection and a gift of insight that would not be satisfied with less than the inner heart of any subject He discussed. It was undeniable even by His interrogators, that Jesus surpassed them in the knowledge of subjects which they claimed as their own; hence, they retired from the struggle in conscious defeat. We also are constrained to confess that a mind which could so swiftly and naturally elude all traps, baffle all sophistry, and convince even some of His foes that He spoke God's truth without fear, must have possessed a quality of superb intellectuality. We make such comments as these, not in the way of passing anything like encomium upon One who transcends all need of such eulogy, but in order that we may appreciate all the various aspects of His total Humanity. And, to complete our review of this part of our Lord's Ministry, we must observe His counter-attack, which He made in no mood of petty spite or desire for retaliation, but simply that they might be incited to revise and enlarge their defective and limited conception of Messiahship. Present-day critical discussions concerning the authorship of Psalm cx. are

quite irrelevant to the real point of our Lord's question. We have studied His life in vain if we have not yet learned that He had a truly human consciousness, and that He was limited by contemporary conditions of scholarship. When the matter to be dealt with was one of spiritual life and of God's relationship to man, Jesus, as we have seen in previous discussions, spoke with a simplicity, directness and certitude that have never been surpassed. On such themes He remains the unrivalled Master. But, in ordinary matters of erudition, His knowledge appears to have been derived from ordinary sources; for example, in regard to this particular psalm Jesus accepted the tradition of authorship and date that prevailed among His contemporaries. Let no one here suppose that we impugn His Divinity; we have already found convincing evidences of this in His perfect love, and not in any escape from the laws which govern the operations of the human mind.

10. One of the principal reasons of the Pharisaic criticism of the authority of Jesus was the over-emphasis given to the Davidic descent of the Messiah, and to the political work of restoring David's Kingdom. Now, many will confess that questions of genealogy, even those of the Gospels, have but little attraction; to such it is but an interesting trifle whether Jesus was truly the Son of David according to the flesh; their glory is that He is the Son of Man and the Son of God. To the ancient scribes, however, the Davidic Sonship was one of the necessary notes of Messiahship. This title, even to Jesus Himself, seemed inadequate to describe Jehovah's Suffering Servant. He would fain have had them transfer the emphasis from the mere individuality begotten of the flesh, to the inward spiritual character. Hence He said to the men around, "David himself said, by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I put thine enemies under thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him 'Lord'; whence then is he his son?" If, during the time of His youth, Jesus ever felt the fascination of the trend of prophecy concerning the earthly and regal splendour of the Messiah, He had since learned to value also the conception of the vicarious Sufferer,—of the Prince who was to be cut off, of the Smitten Shepherd. Popular imagination, however, fastened naturally upon the national hope of a hero-king like David. Even if the haughty scribes were un-



willing to revise their interpretations of Scripture, Jesus would gladly have emancipated the populace from submission to doctrines which lacked spiritual insight. He aimed at suggesting to their minds a nobler, truer, and more practicable notion of God's Anointed. The scribes dared not even attempt to answer Jesus; and, as in speech so now in silence, they stand self-exposed as incompetent guides. Thus did the planned attacks of His allied foes come to naught; their subtle schemes of entangling Jesus in debate, of betraying Him into some word that might be used against Him in a charge of treason, or of discrediting Him before His followers, resulted only in their own confusion. He reduced His assailants to impotent silence, sweeping away their cobwebs of sophistry, and lifting all minds that were willing on to a spiritual plane of thought where selfishness and pedantry are asphyxiated.

II. The Master did not permit His malignant enemies to slip away without a final rebuke; for the sake of the unlearned, He administered public castigation. They were dangerous to others, since they sat "in Moses' seat"; although they made an ostentatious show of zeal for religion, they took away the "key of knowledge," and obstructed the entrance into the Reign of God. Jesus stripped them of their pretences, and pilloried them for all time as types of insincerity—as mere actors of religion; as blind pedants, who placed unnecessary burdens upon the people. There was no taint of weakness in the Humanity of Jesus; His love was a passion for righteousness. While He was, as we have shown in this chapter once again, preëminently pitiful towards error and sin, He was intolerant of all hypocrisy, hurling against it the lightning-like invectives of His terrible indignation. He pitied most tenderly the penitent harlot, but He did not spare her hard-hearted accusers. We cannot comprehend such complexity of character as this; in our portrait of Him we must link together His stern rebukes of Pharisaism and His lamentation and tears over the doomed city; the seven woes uttered in the temple must be placed side by side with the Beatitudes He uttered on the Mount. Although St. Luke has given a different setting to the "woes," we cannot but realize that they belong most probably to the Passion-week. There is no other time when this philippic against the clerical party of Judaism could have been so fitly delivered. It is the climax of a struggle which we have



traced from the first breach of Jesus with the authorized representatives of Israel over the healing of the man with the withered hand. Whether the unity and eloquence of this final public address attributed to Jesus be regarded as proof of its integrity and authenticity, or whether these shall be looked upon as marks of the editor's own literary skill, may be left to the personal judgement of each reader; it is enough for our use that it gives a true impression of the culminating stage of a long-continued struggle between Jesus and the acknowledged theologians of that age. The people had cherished a hope that Jesus would sound the tocsin of revolt, whereas He rang out the knell of Jerusalem's doom. He saw, as in a dreadful vision, the red stream of blood running through the streets—the blood of the slain prophets from Abel to Zechariah. He saw also, in the leaders of Judaism, the same murderous spirit as that which had led their fathers to persecute the prophets. The scribes and Pharisees had filled the cup of Israel's iniquity; therefore Jehovah's wrath would soon destroy the city. Once again Israel had rejected the Divine visitation, in consequence of which Jesus predicts the resistless approach of the Days of Retribution. Because Jerusalem had made the last great refusal of Christ's offer of a Spiritual Kingdom, Jesus feels His heart pierced by great sorrow, and pours out a noble threnody over the city, so gloriously described in ancient prophecy and psalm. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

BOOK VIII  
THE LAST DAYS OF THE PASSION



## CHAPTER I

### THE GREEKS DESIRE TO SEE JESUS

I. CERTAIN clearly defined groups of events, such as the attacks upon Christ's authority, the deliverance of the Judgement parables, and incidents such as the eulogy upon the widow and the visit of the Greeks, belong unmistakably to the terminating period of His public ministry. Of the exact sequence of these events and the days on which they happened we have no assurance; and yet such uncertainty as exists cannot materially affect the incidents of which we shall treat in this chapter. The evangelists themselves have shown great freedom in the *placing* of some of the incidents of the Gospel. Comparing their several accounts, we perceive that while they adhered in a general way to the main tradition of the ministry, they did not scruple to transpose their materials and to regroup whole collections of the sayings of Jesus under the directive influence of their several aims. This characteristic of the Gospels has made it very difficult in carrying out any attempt to trace the natural development of the several parts of Christ's Ministry. And yet such an attempt, however much accompanied by hesitating uncertainty at various points, is easily justifiable, since it cannot be denied that His teachings were modified by the occasions which elicited them, and that the sequence of events, in spite of all uncertainties, does manifest the presence of some definite plan of activity working in the mind of Jesus from the beginning. Although it may be a misnomer to speak of the development of Christ's purpose, since His dominant purpose remained unchanged throughout, yet it is necessary that full recognition be given to the graduated manifestation of that purpose. On the other hand we make no *a priori* denial of the possibility that Jesus Himself was only slowly introduced to all the obligations and incidental applications of that generic purpose which He summed up in the phrase that He came to do the Will of the Father. The surprises and disappointments that He passed through can be sympathetically understood by any man who has striven, through long years, to

evinced in daily conduct the fidelity he promised in early vows. If we speak of development, therefore, in the Ministry of Jesus, we must keep clearly in mind that it was the fulfilling manifestation of His purpose, and not a change in that purpose itself. No one can miss the deepening note of intensity and of self-assertion as Jesus drew near to the Cross. Further, no one would for one moment think of transposing the Sermon on the Mount and the Apocalypse of Jesus, or of reversing the position of the parables of the Kingdom and the Judgement parables. Whatever diffidence we have felt in placing the Johannine accounts of Christ's conversations with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, we cannot obscure the fact that for the most part the Gospels themselves reflect with some clearness the distinct periods of the Ministry of Jesus—the beginning, middle and end. And yet that ministry was not a long one. Some have calculated that it lasted about eighteen months; and for ourselves we judge that it was framed within three Jewish Passovers. Hence, although we have tentatively placed the Raising of Lazarus back in the middle period of the ministry, we can still accept John's testimony that it exercised a determining influence over the development of the tragedy of the last days.

2. From this general notion of a traceable development in our Lord's public life, we pass to one of the small but not insignificant incidents of the Last Week, the Master's observation of the widow's offering and His ensuing eulogy. The place given to it in St. Mark's gospel<sup>1</sup>—immediately after our Lord's scathing denunciation of the hard, greedy hypocrisy of those scribes who robbed widows—explains itself. We imagine that it occurred after the disputation with the Herodians and Pharisees had ended, when, pervaded perhaps by a feeling of nausea, Jesus sat down at "the treasury"—i.e. in the "court of the women," where there were thirteen trumpet-shaped boxes placed for the offerings of the worshippers. A word in St. Luke's narrative, that He "looked up," (*ἀναβλέψας*) suggests to us that Jesus may have sat awhile with closed eyes, as one absorbed in meditation, when He was prompted to look up and observe the various offerings made by the worshippers. This was no act of rude inquisitiveness, but of the reverence He cherished for all that belonged to His Father's House. There are two errors which

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 41-44.



betray some who criticize the Gospels; they ignore the difference between the East and the West; for it ought constantly to be borne in mind that, compared with the etiquette of the West, the manners of the eastern races are characterized by greater suavity and completer frankness; and the subtlest diplomacy is often accompanied by surprising boldness of speech. The second error is the singular assumption that the conduct of Jesus can be judged as though He were an ordinary eastern gentleman. At every step we are reminded of this uniqueness. What the mere man of letters misinterprets as the evidences of the growing fanaticism of a poetic dreamer, was the boldness of a mind dominated by the consciousness of a mission. Those who admit that Jesus was a prophet must allow Him also the exercise of a prophet's prerogatives. Those who acknowledge His Messiahship admit that He sustained relationships and discharged obligations which could belong to no other. The assumption that Jesus must be reduced to the standards which apply to ordinary human lives stultifies and distorts the conception of His life. Jesus was not a mere conventional Passover pilgrim; He was One acting under the compelling sense of Messianic responsibility. In His attempt to cleanse the temple He had announced in action a certain right to direct the affairs of the temple; and now, in setting Himself so deliberately to observe what the worshippers cast into the treasury, He was acting in His character as Messiah. No ordinary citizen could, without violating all the instincts and conventions of propriety and good feeling, scrutinize the gifts and criticize the motives of those who cast their offerings into the public treasury. Certainly it cannot be contended that Jesus behaved as an ordinary eastern gentleman; in word and action He assumed a tremendous authority over men. He was silent about the munificent contributions made by the rich; but when He observed the approach of a poor woman, whom He appears to have known, and saw her cast in two mites—even all she had—Jesus was constrained to express His approval. Bengel makes the inaccurate comment that the woman might have kept half for her own use; she might have retained both, but two *lepta* really formed the smallest permissible offering. Jesus was deeply moved by the widow's piety. On her wan face He read the vow of perfect self-abnegation, and, calling His disciples' attention, He said: "Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they are casting into the treasury; for they cast

in of their superfluity, but she of her need cast in all that she had, even all her living."<sup>1</sup> She had learnt the Spirit of self-sacrifice, and all unconsciously to herself, she was sharing the passion of her Lord. This incident, trifling in itself and without apparent influence upon the current of our Lord's life, is of value to us—first, because it is too casual and unimportant to be attributed to fictitious invention (it bears its own witness that it is a genuine reminiscence); and, secondly, it discloses our Lord's habit of thought and His natural skill in disentangling the real inner acts of the will with their motives from all the accidents of circumstance. He was undaunted by the appearance of wealth and power, and preserved His singleness and purity of judgement so that He was ever able to penetrate into the arcana of thoughts and purposes whence human conduct springs.

3. It is possible that, while Jesus was resting at the treasury, there occurred the memorable interview with the Greeks which is recorded and preserved only in the Fourth Gospel. Some have judged this incident to be a kind of symbolic legend, which sprang from a natural desire to set Christ forth in His relations to the Gentile world. That there may be legendary elements in the Gospels and that this may be one, we shall not contend is a thing incredible; but when we seek to gain for ourselves an unbiassed impression of the narrative, we perceive in its central simile an affinity with the teaching of Jesus preserved in the Synoptics; and so strikingly in harmony with our general conception of the Personality of Jesus are the words here attributed to Him, we are led to believe that we trace the autograph of His mind upon the *logion* concerning the grain of wheat. This Johannine story does not stand quite alone; a parallel tradition of a Gentile embassy to Jesus is related by Eusebius.<sup>2</sup> This ecclesiastical historian tells how Abgarus, the King of Edessa in Mesopotamia, sent messengers to Jesus with a letter entreating Him to come to his country and heal the royal suppliant who was sick, suggesting also that, since the Jews were murmuring against Jesus, it might be worth His while to take

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce in *Expos. Greek N. T.* quotes Euthemius Zigabenus: "May my soul become a widow casting out the devil to which it is joined and subject, and casting into the treasury of God two *lepta*, the body and the mind; the one made light by temperance, the other by humility."

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, i. 13.

up His permanent residence in Edessa. Whether such a letter was really sent to Jesus, we do not know; for Eusebius, the Father of Church History, writing at the beginning of the fourth century, could only record a tradition which he had heard from others, and while intending to be truthful, he is not reputed to have been rigorously critical. While, therefore, we dare not identify the story Eusebius has told with that found in the Fourth Gospel, the mere existence of such a parallel does certainly tend to excite popular credence. We infer from St. John's account that the visitors from afar who sought an interview with Jesus were not Hellenists, but Greek "proselytes of the Gate."<sup>1</sup> Unless we identify them in imagination with the embassy from Abgarus, we may suppose that they had come to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, and, hearing so much of the name of Jesus and of the controversy which raged about His authority, they became desirous of seeing and hearing Him for themselves. From their presence in Jerusalem during Passover-week, and from the serious manner in which Jesus responded to their inquiry, we cannot but infer that these men were genuine seekers after truth;—already they appear to have passed from the lofty philosophies of Greece to the pure monotheistic religion of Israel; and, still urged on by their desire to find the pearl of great price, they were seeking an interview with Jesus. Such inquirers articulate the insatiable thirst for religious knowledge that springs up in the hearts of men in every land—a divine unrest drawing men to Christ. "Possibly," as Dr. Greville Macdonald says, "the most eager of questioners, the most clear-sighted of seers, will find that, to our limited means of understanding, the only possible answer to some questions lies in a grant of increased capacity for asking yet profounder questions."<sup>2</sup>

4. No student of the Gospels can fail to feel the charm of suggestiveness inherent in the record that once, at least, Jesus came into direct contact with the Greek spirit of rational and religious inquiry. St. Paul's dictum, that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, is not to be applied to the spirit of genuine philosophy. Surely the Apostle did not thus stigmatize that noble method of reasoning which is inspired by a

<sup>1</sup> Ἕλληνας, not Ἕλληνοί.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tree in the Midst*, p. 14.

quenchless thirst for the true, the good and the beautiful. Because, at the beginning of the Christian era, there was a degenerate race of sophists given over to vain logomachy and fantastic eclecticism, we ought not, therefore, to place under a ban the instinctive quests of all noble minds for truth and goodness; for, however wavering and uncertain the light of reason has proved, it is yet a beam from that Light which lighteth every man. Just as the human race brings into all its activities of observation and classification an implicit and a *a priori* plan of the universe which has been the guide of all science, so the spirit in man proves itself to be the source of ideals and of all noble promptings in the philosophical and ethical interpretations of the world; and in some measure these have all been adumbrations of the truth revealed in Jesus. Among all the various races the Greeks were most fully imbued with this noble spirit of rational inquiry, which was, we think, predestined to find in Christ the actuality of truth which corresponds with its deepest questioning. As Moses and the Prophets proved themselves to be pedagogues, whose highest function was to bring men to the School of Christ, so Æschylus, Plato and Phidias, with their allies—all of whom sought to express in their several ways the realities of the Spirit and imagination—were all prophets of the ultimate Ideal which we believe has been embodied in Jesus. And both Jews and Greeks set forth with intenser realization than other races those emotional and moral states of our common human experience, wherein “every man, woman and child has glimpses of revelations, tacit, inexpressible, into a world lying beyond and around the world of material limitations.”

5. The Greeks cast their crowns before Jesus because they find in Him the universality of the Perfect Son of Man. The Glory of Jesus consists, in part at least, in His marvellous comprehension and synthesis of the partial insights and glimpses of the Ideal which have visited all races. We cannot, with accuracy, speak of many religions, for there can be but one true religion; and all existing systems are based on fragmentary apprehensions of the catholic truth. Drawn by the thought of all that this visit of the Greeks to Jesus signified, we are naturally led to think of the ancient philosophy of their race which, however wonderful in itself, was too exclusively intellectual in its appeal and deficient in ethical inspiration;—its light is cold as



the lunar rays, and ineffectual in vivifying human hearts. "The highest result of ancient philosophy had been the conception of the world as a system of thought, related to God as His word or expression—i.e. as the spoken thought is related to the man. This conception, however, great as it was, did not present God under moral attributes; nor did it bring Him near to the conscience of the individual. But in Christ, the writer whom the Church calls St. John saw this divine thought manifesting itself in human life as truth and love; and that not merely or fully through a past visible existence, though such existence had been vouchsafed as 'a sign,' but through a spirit which should dwell in men, drawn out of the world, won from sense and the flesh forever."<sup>1</sup> While it was probably a characteristically intellectual impulse which prompted the Greek proselytes to inquire after Jesus, subsequent reflection would show them that He who had spoken to them such profound mysticism was not a philosophic teacher so much as a Lord over the spirit and conscience. Even today Christianity loses its moral urgency if it be treated as simply another system of ideas; for, while Jesus indirectly responded to the intellectual questionings of men, He claimed, as His chief function in our world, to reveal the perfect moral ideal to the conscience and to redeem the sinful will from its bondage in the iron furnace of evil. Even Baur, who gave so much of his strength to the discovery of the historical foundations of the Christian religion, admits that, "had Christianity been nothing more than such a doctrine of religion and morality, . . . what would it have amounted to, and what would come of it? True though it be that when we regard Christianity in this aspect, it comprised and summed up those pure and simple truths which utter themselves in man's moral and religious consciousness, and that it opened up these truths to the common mind in the plainest and most popular style; yet more than this was needed. . . . When we consider the way in which Christianity grew up, it is plain that it could have had no place nor significance in history but for the Person of its Founder!"<sup>2</sup> However, the greater contains the less, and any real satisfaction of the moral need of mankind must possess an inherent rationality. Jesus would not have acquired preëminence among men had His teaching been inadequate to meet the intellectual inquiry

<sup>1</sup> Professor T. H. Green, *Works*, iii., pp. 242-3.

<sup>2</sup> *The First Three Christian Centuries*, vol. i., p. 37 (Eng. ed.).



of the Greeks. While both St. Paul and St. John magnified the Redeeming Love which was revealed in Jesus, they also set forth that Love as the Wisdom and the Logos of God. The coming of the Greeks was a prophetic type of Christ's reign over the human intellect and heart—a reign which modern questionings have but helped to confirm.

6. "Sir,"<sup>1</sup> said the strangers to Philip, "we would see Jesus." The Greek name of the disciple whom they approached has prompted the thought that he may have been of Greek lineage. If this were not so he probably belonged to Decapolis, where he may have had some connection with heathen families. The fact that Gentiles should desire to see Jesus at this stage of His Ministry clearly impressed the imagination of Philip as a thing of some moment, and he communicated the matter to Andrew, his fellow-disciple, who accompanied him to Jesus' presence and acted as spokesman. The apparent hesitation of Philip may have arisen from his Master's remembered assertion that He had come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. We do not know whether the Greeks waited a little way off until permission was granted them to approach; but this seems most probable, and would betray the innate courtesy of the visitors, and it also gave a space for an expression of the emotion felt by Jesus before He addressed them directly. The event itself fits in with the sequences of His experience on the Wednesday previous to the Crucifixion, and it brought a momentary solace to the lacerated heart of Jesus; for He deemed it a beautiful prophecy of His triumph that, in the hour of Jewish official rejection of His claims, there should come to Him ambassadors of a race which such an One as Jesus could not but admire and love. The restriction of His Ministry to the Jews was but a temporary economy practised by the Master because of the "little while" which He would stay as a man among men. Upon hearing Andrew's message that the Greeks sought after Him, Jesus exclaimed, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified!" Such an ejaculation can be understood in its connection with antecedent and subsequent events; He had felt Himself straitened until He should receive the Baptism of Blood; and when the Cross had loomed in sight, He had set His face toward it as the only goal of His life;

<sup>1</sup> John xii. zoff.

now the coming of these strangers drew His vision toward the future; He looked beyond the Cross and beheld a throne whence He would wield a Messianic sway over the Gentiles. It is significant that, at such a moment, Jesus should use a title for Himself which is at once so distinctively Hebrew and yet undeniably universal in its implications—"the Son of Man." For centuries the Greek and Roman mind had, all unconsciously, moved toward the Ideal revealed in the Son of Man. First the philosophers had undermined the polytheism of popular mythology in their quest for the true unity, although in their imperfect vision the Soul of the World was rather an immanent natural power than a transcendent, moral Spirit. This longing for one God had impelled these sages of Greece to become proselytes of the Hebrew religion; but the inherent direction of monotheism is ever Christward. Plato had spoken of Christ, even as Moses and the Prophets. The dramatists, philosophers and sculptors of ancient Greece, by their majestic conceptions, lofty reasonings and creations of perfect symmetry and grace, had given an impulse toward some universal, human ideal that would not be thwarted by dalliance with veiled corruptions. Jesus responded to the Greek craving for a Perfect Ideal, not only by realizing it in Himself, but also by establishing His Messianic Kingdom as the Divine Antitype of that political wisdom which sought after free institutions wherein man finds the true *Koinonia* with his fellowmen. "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified!"

7. The Evangelist says nothing of the salutations and reciprocated courtesies in the meeting of these Greek inquirers with Jesus; whatever our natural interest in a beautiful story may be, St. John himself passes by such details without a word, writing as one who is overwhelmed by the amazing disclosure of the Mind of Jesus concerning His self-sacrifice. In following His guidance, we do not make ourselves oblivious of the historical incidents, but we look upon these simply as the framework from which looks out the Mind of Christ. Fondly as we would gaze upon the form and hues of His flesh, our supreme quest is that we may learn His thought and action, and so understand the Divine Secret of His life. Having followed step by step the successive unfoldments of the meanings and motives of His necessary and self-determined sacrifice, we shall be prepared to

find profound and precious ideas in the simile of the grain of wheat which fructifies only in death. "Unless," said Jesus, "the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains by itself alone: but if it die, it bears plentiful fruit." Once again Jesus sets forth His death as the supreme instance of the operation of a general law. Life from death is a rule in nature and in morals. It applies to the grain of wheat and to the life of man, although in the spiritual realm its action is informed by thoughts, feelings and purposes. Reflection stimulates remembrance of the manifold applicability and governance of this idea of life from death. Self-culture was the Greek ideal; but the law of Jesus was self-sacrifice. He announces a power of spiritual emancipation resulting from all self-immolation of the will. If the instinct of self-preservation dominates the life, it is doomed first to sterility, and then to dissolution. The ethic of Jesus flung forth in this aphorism, and exemplified on the Cross, will never be displaced by the cold, hard brilliance of Goethe's ideal of universal culture. "He who loves his life, loses it: and he who hates his life in this world shall preserve it to life eternal." There must have been something in the attitude of these Greeks that indicated a preparedness to receive this doctrine of dying to live, or surely Jesus could not have so laid bare the workings of His inmost thoughts to them. He tells them that His approaching doom is no accident, His fate is governed by universal laws; His life could not be snatched out of the hand of a Fatherly Providence. He was not as a straw in the wind, nor a cork on the waves; He was a bold swimmer in the flood. He laid down His life; He put it in the ground, assured that a new life, multiplied and glorious, would spring up. He waived the last possibilities of choosing to save His own life, and, in rejecting self-love as His motive, learned the fulness of Divine Wisdom and Power. By laying down His life Jesus realized God's Eternal life. Professor T. H. Green wrote, "God was in Him, so that what He did, God did. A death unto life, a life out of death, must then be, in some way, the essence of the Divine nature; must be an act which, though exhibited once for all in the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, was yet eternal—the act of God Himself. For that very reason, however, it was one perpetually reënacted, and to be reënacted by man."<sup>1</sup> The dying and rising of Jesus are appropriated and repeated in all the

<sup>1</sup> Professor T. H. Green, *Works*, Miscellanies, vol. iii., p. 233.

actual processes of our spiritual life; even in our acceptance of punishment for sin and in the consciousness of penitence, we die to the flesh that we may live unto God. Death is the setting free of germinal possibilities—true alike of a grain of wheat, of an acorn, of a man. By going into the ground, Jesus made it beautiful with resurrection life. The laws of life are universal; yet the rule of dying to live is, in mere animals and lower organisms, an impulse toward a utilitarian satisfaction; but in man it is the struggle to realize an ideal. In this simile of the grain of wheat dying to live again, Jesus enunciated the law of perfection—love for others. Every self-denial is a part of the process of daily dying; every step in such death is a condition for unfolding higher potentialities; and, in the end, even physical death may be accepted as the entrance into fuller activity of living.

8. While the Son of Man cherished no morbid sentiment of self-pity, still He was wounded by the rejection of His claims by the Jews; and as He saw the Greeks seeking Him, He felt the contrast they made with the hostile rulers and there was wrung from His heart a cry of poignant distress: "Now is My soul troubled; and what am I to say? Father, save Me from this hour? Nay, it was for this that I came to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name!" It seemed as though the serene depth of even His faith was disturbed by a paroxysm of mental agony. He was still a young man, and the self-preserving instincts of His nature revolted from the prevision of His tragic destiny. It was, however, only a momentary disturbance: the life-long habit of filial obedience swiftly resumed its sway, and He breathed His longing to complete the manifestation of His Father's Name, i.e. His Father's character and purpose. This experience came to Him as a passing anticipation of a struggle to be gone through in Gethsemane. That it was historic is most probable, since the dominating conception of the Fourth Gospel—of the Logos tabernacling among men—would naturally preclude the invention of a painful struggle which seems to contradict all our presuppositions of what an Incarnation must involve. We do not interpret this as intended by St. John to take the place of the soul-wrestle transacted in the Garden which is recorded by the Synoptics; but we take it to be an historic foreshadowing of that agony, and the Evangelist enables us to discern the motives and aims



of Jesus which sustained Him in His resolution to lay down His life. His determination to die was no fanatical quixotism; it was, rather, the uttermost expression of moral wisdom and love. Only by His dying would He be able to satisfy the universal quest that the coming of the Greeks represented. When lifted up from the earth He would draw all men unto Him. The centre of gravity in His Messianic ministry was transferred from Jerusalem to the realm of Eternal Verities. The Cross did not obstruct His pathway to the throne; it was itself the way—through death to life. The Spirit of His life was gathered up and focused on the Cross, and from His death have issued the fruits of resurrection life. Thus did Jesus translate the physical metaphor of dying into a Spiritual act which expressed ethically all His life-thoughts and purposes. He was completing the manifestation of His Father's Name. The least meaning that we can attribute to this soliloquy which the Greeks overheard is that in His self-sacrifice Jesus gave the world a symbol of the Father; He manifested His Name. God cannot be morally less than the highest man. Jesus gives the Ariadne clue which shall guide us in the labyrinth of this world: God is love; and love is ever bestowing itself.

9. According to the Evangelist, there came from the sky an answering voice to the cry of Jesus. Some of the bystanders said it thundered; others interpreted the sound to signify words of Divine approval. Acquaintance with the recorded experiences of the mystics forbids the rash assumption that this Heavenly Voice was a delusion; and, however psychologists may explain such phenomena, we are face to face with the fact that such voices played important parts in the lives of Francis Xavier, Jeanne d'Arc, and George Fox. All the Gospels represent Jesus as being the receiver of such audible messages at the great crises of His mission—at His baptism, on the Mount of Transfiguration; and now, in the temple-courts, the revelation was given of His Father's approval. The assurance was given to Jesus once more that death should be no defeat, but the fulfilment and triumph of all His work. The Son of Man would be enthroned in the Heavens; from that seat of Divine Power He would exercise a universal attraction. This was, indeed, a startling transformation of the popular Messianic ideal; and few were found ready to receive it then, since it contradicted the primary



postulates of a narrow patriotism. Perplexed by this strange doctrine of the exaltation of the Son of Man, some of the listeners inquired whom He thus designated, since the Scriptures taught that the Messiah abides for ever. The Evangelist declares that the true cause of the blindness and hostility of the Jews was that "they loved the honour of men more than the honour of God." And yet, in spite of their enmity, John says "many even of the rulers believed on Him." Among the final utterances of Jesus in the temple are His charges against the Jews that they remain in darkness, though He had brought them light; and, since they reject Himself, whom God had sent, they resolve themselves into practical atheists. He came not with the intention of judging the world, but rather of saving it; yet it was inevitable that they should be judged by the Revelation they refused. How remote were the leading Jews of that day from the ethic of self-sacrifice of which Jesus had spoken to the Greeks! That word has thrown a luminous track over the devious paths of human history. With this twofold revelation of self-sacrifice and of the world's condemnation, Jesus concluded His public ministry of teaching. During the ensuing hours He secreted Himself from public attention, using the opportunity for giving final instructions to His disciples.

## CHAPTER II

### THE APOCALYPSE OF JESUS<sup>1</sup>

I. AN unprejudiced examination of the extant records of the teaching of Jesus shows that, with His perfect ethic of man's present life, He combined apocalyptic and eschatological ideas which are utterly discordant with the trend of modern thought. The *kerygma* of the Kingdom has been placed in the forefront of modern presentations of Christ's teaching as at least equally important with the idea of the Divine Fatherhood; but although the present-day emphasis falls upon the social ethic of the Kingdom, in the Gospels we find apocalyptic and eschatological ideas inextricably woven into the warp and woof of Christ's doctrine of the Messianic Reign. Whatever may be our personal predilections in this matter, and however much we should prefer a Messianic Ideal shorn of such Jewish associations, still we must be faithful to the historical method, giving due recognition to all the integral parts of our Lord's teaching, and seeking without bias to discover their true interpretation. We note that the age in which Jesus lived was characterized by a proneness to indulge in apocalyptic visions of crisis and catastrophe. This section of Jewish literature was pseudonymous; the producers of it concealed themselves behind the great names of patriarchs and prophets. While the germs of *apocalypse* were present from early times in the Jewish mind, we may describe this class of literature as differing from ordinary prophecy, and from the theophanic visions of the older prophets, in that these were to be fulfilled in the present æon, while the apocalypse relates specifically to the dispensation of the end; unfolding, in hieroglyph and fantasy, the consummation of the great drama of the Divine Revelation and of Human History. The *apocalypse* has been called "the stormy petrel of religious literature"; its *motif* is the conviction that life has become so terrible that it cannot be long held back from some climactic judgement. In the similitudes

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xxi. The trend of recent New Testament criticism is to lay increasing emphasis upon the validity of the apocalyptic elements in the teaching of Jesus.

of the Book of Enoch, for example, one of the chief functions of the Messiah is that of judgement. While popular Messianism conceived of David's Son making Zion the centre of a reëstablished reign, into which the chosen people should enter by right of their descent from Abraham, it also anticipated that the extension of this rule over all nations should be preceded by judgement and catastrophic condemnations. Not only do these apocalypses of Judaism help us to understand the oscillation of opinion about Jesus and the frequent disappointment of great spiritually minded Jews such as John the Baptist as they watched His career, but they also disclose the original sources of the eschatological ideas and language adopted by Jesus Himself. We believe that He assimilated and used these just as He employed also the categories of natural science current in that age, and also as He treated the phenomena of hysteria and madness according to the Jewish beliefs concerning demon-possession. These things constituted parts of the Messiah's environment and mental inheritance, and the timeless message He brought had necessarily to be uttered in the popular and understandable language of that age. In thus acknowledging the influence of the *Zeit-geist* upon Jesus Himself, it is by no means implied that both the psychology and eschatology of that age must be discarded as untrue; the truth and validity of such ideas must still be measured by the reason and conscience of the race in the light of all added knowledge: the utmost we assert is, that however much may have been due to the Jewish ancestry and contemporary culture, still there is in the Personality and Preaching of Jesus a timeless Word, possessing an abiding authority for the spiritual mind.

2. Fidelity to the records preserved in the Gospels compels us to acknowledge that Jesus Himself adopted the apocalyptic forms of utterance, and clothed His thoughts of the future in figures and pictorial representations that had their origin in the school of the Apocalyptists. Many thoughtful Christians would experience immense relief if the discourse on the last things attributed to Jesus could be lightly dismissed as the interpolation of one of the current Jewish pseudepigraphical apocalypses of that age. Today we delight in views of evolution, of graduated and slow progressive movements from protoplasmic beginnings up to a perfect state, the whole process being carried through

from end to end without break or interruption; but in the apocalyptic literature of the Jews there were no soft nuances of development, all the transitions were conceived as swift, sudden and dreadful. On the other hand, we do find in the teaching of Jesus many thoughts of a slow, gradual development of the Reign of God, to illustrate which He spoke many parables—several of the most striking being taken from the familiar instances of sowing, germination, growth, fructification and harvest. The method often adopted in dealing with the dualism of the parables and the apocalyptic sayings of Jesus is one of mental suppression of the less agreeable factor, which, however unintentional, results in the exclusion of part of the teaching of our Lord. Some of the apocalyptic sayings have that “real double attestation” which is “the nearest approach that we can hope to get to the common tradition of the earliest Christian Society about our Lord’s words.” Those who put any belief in the historical nucleus of the Gospels can have no doubt that Jesus was not only familiar with apocalyptic literature, but that He Himself appropriated some of its terminology for the expression of certain of His own cherished ideals. How utterly inadequate is that treatment of the New Testament doctrine of “the Kingdom of God” which tacitly excludes all reference to its eschatological implications! Further, it is unjustifiable to reduce our Lord’s self-chosen title—“the Son of Man”—to signify nothing more than the Aramaic for “Man,” and brusquely set aside all the apocalyptic associations of this Messianic title. Just as fragments of rock carry their own testimony of the geological strata to which they belong, so such phrases as these, however much transformed by the Mind of Jesus, bear witness of themselves that they belong to the apocalyptic tradition of that age. And besides such distinctive phrases as these, we find imbedded in the teaching of Jesus sayings that are undoubtedly authentic, and yet which share in the apocalyptic ideals current in the contemporary Judaism. The recognition of these scattered fragments of that peculiar section of Jewish tradition in the general preaching of Jesus prepares us to admit the genuineness of the apocalypse which is attributed to Him. Such apocalyptic utterances subsequently exercised a great formative influence upon apostolic teaching: hence, it has been suggested that this particular fragment of Christ’s doctrine may have been transmitted orally or circulated as a popular fly-leaf of His sayings

from the earliest times. Some such "Word of the Lord" appears to have been known to St. Paul and to the Primitive Church generally, and the circulation of the apocalyptic sayings of Jesus would account for the general expectation of His *parousia*, which is witnessed by the Johannine writings and Pauline epistles. This acceptance of the Gospel apocalypse lays upon the reader the difficult and delicate task of disentangling the diverse fragments of Jewish eschatology from the essential ideas of Jesus. We may adopt without reserve "the findings" of one of the most cautious of living scholars: "I believe that our Lord used a great deal of eschatological language; that His language was, generally speaking, more eschatological in its origin than at one time supposed. But does it follow that eschatology exhausted the meaning of this language; that its fulfilment was bound to be exclusively eschatological? I do not think it does follow." "Our Lord rarely took up a Jewish idea without recasting it in a form of His own."<sup>1</sup>

3. In dealing with the apocalyptic element of Christ's teaching we ought to keep in mind the fact that Jesus predicted not only His own death, but also His reappearance; and, with that note of authority and transcendence which characterized Him, inculcated upon His disciples the duty of watchfulness for His return. In His own personal outlook it appears that Jesus anticipated the Cross as the beginning of His Messianic reign, and that from that point the Kingdom should increase analogously with the seed sown into the soil; but, besides this graduated progress, He also foretold certain crises and epochs, although He disclaimed knowledge of times and seasons. One of the outstanding moments of this future history of the Kingdom was designated by Jesus as "the beginning of birth-pangs."<sup>2</sup> In this memorable phrase we possess not merely a vague prediction but a metaphor which reflects the travail and struggle of the initial processes of the Coming of the Kingdom. The forecast of the persecution of the apostles may have been uttered *by* Jesus Himself, but it is not beyond credence that this vision of pain and trial may have been reflected back upon His Ministry from the painful experience of the Church, caught in the throes

<sup>1</sup> "The Bearing of Criticism upon Gospel History," by Professor Sanday, *Expos. Times*, vol. xx., No. 4, January, 1909.

<sup>2</sup> ἀρχὴ ὀδίνων.



of a life and death struggle thirty or forty years later. Our difficulty is increased by characteristic differences in the respective Gospels; the apocalyptic utterances are grouped into an orderly discourse by St. Matthew, although these same sayings are distributed in utterly different connections by the third evangelist.<sup>1</sup> Again, while St. Mark places the prediction of apostolic persecution at the end of the ministry, St. Matthew gives it in connection with the commission of the Twelve to take up their first Galilean mission.<sup>2</sup> When we observe that the haunting allusion to "the abomination of desolation" is accentuated by an exhortation, "let him that readeth understand," we at once remember that Jesus did not write His discourses. Still another evidence of the mingling of subsequent reflections with the teaching of our Lord is found in the statement,—“ unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, he shortened the days ”—a statement manifestly dating from a time later than the destruction of Jerusalem. We have already pointed out that an alloy of Judaistic symbolism is blended with the pure gold of Christ's thought; but now we find that additions from a later stage of history have been made to the record of the sayings of the Master. Such a mingling of various elements does not invalidate the authority of the Words of Jesus; but it does, without doubt, render somewhat doubtful whether certain words were really spoken by Him. Unfortunately we lack the artificer's cunning which enables him to burn up, with a spirit of fiery acid, the alloy which he has used to harden the precious metal; in our attempt to extricate Christ's original authoritative revelation from its contemporary associations we have to proceed slowly, tentatively and painfully, menaced ever with the fear lest we should be guilty of destroying some of the fine gold of Truth. But such perils make the duty of investigation more urgent, and the task is laid upon us to rediscover what is the essential Revelation of Jesus for us.

4. The use of the title "the Son of Man" in the Books of Daniel and of Enoch, conveys an apocalyptic connotation, and has made it impossible for any ordinary man to appropriate this Messianic designation. The functions attributed to "the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. xxiv. 26-28; Luke xii. 39-46; xvii. 24; and Matt. xxiv. 42-51.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. x. 17-22.

Son of Man" are supernatural; He is to rule and judge the nations when He cometh in the clouds of heaven. In choosing this title for Himself, Jesus could not have been oblivious of its apocalyptic associations; it necessarily carries the implication of a colossal claim to the Messiahship, and could scarcely be justified unless Jesus were the Superior of all other historic men. In adopting this Name Jesus transformed it by its predicates just as He gradually spiritualized the conception of the Kingdom which was announced by John the Baptist. The supreme instance of this marvellous transfusion of an accepted Messianic ideal with a new and exalted meaning is found in the declaration that "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." But, blended with this conception of a redemptive work, we find apocalyptic declarations which sprang from the common stock of Judaistic ideas. One of the vital, determinative apocalyptic affirmations concerning the Son of Man made by Jesus Himself was that the Son of Man will return to the world with Messianic glory and majesty. Although quite alien from modern modes of thought, no student of the New Testament can avoid the conclusion that the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus played an important part in the formation of the Apostolic Church. But while this *parousia*-idea is homogeneous with the apocalyptic tradition of the Primitive Church, the "congenial Messianic beliefs of contemporary Judaism would hardly have been sufficient to start the opinion, unless it had some basis in the authority of Christ."<sup>1</sup> Since that hope has nearly faded like some delusive mirage from the horizon, many would fain believe that Jesus was not the originator of this false expectation. There can, however, be little or no doubt that, in His examination before the chief-priests, Jesus affirmed that the Son of Man would come again: "The high-priest asked Him . . . Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."<sup>2</sup> It would afford a facile escape from our dilemma could we acquiesce in Professor J. E. Carpenter's conjecture, that in using the title "the Son of Man," Jesus intended it as a personification of the Kingdom rather than as a personal appellation: "The invariable employment of the

<sup>1</sup> Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*, pp. 268, 637f.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xiv. 61, 62. Cf. Dan. vii. 13, 14.

third person suggests that He intended to draw a clear distinction between Himself and His own function, and the event which He designates by this emblematic name.”<sup>1</sup> Now, although we admit that there may have been occasions when Jesus identified Himself with the Kingdom of God in some such way as this, still there is no warrant for the assertion that He usually employed the name, “Son of Man,” in this impersonal way. Once again, we recollect the fact that Jesus was animated by two abiding convictions—first, that He would personally survive the catastrophe of death; and, secondly, that the Divine Reign would be brought about by His Resurrection from the dead. Having made all allowances for the inevitable modifications which memory might make in Christ’s words; for the changes which might be occasioned by translation from Aramaic into a literary language; for the possibility that the knowledge of subsequent events might be thrown back upon His earthly teaching; for the probability that current apocalyptic ideas would mingle with His eschatological doctrines,—having made full allowances for all these natural tendencies, we still adhere to the belief that Jesus Himself did actually forecast the future—both immediate and remote—of the Reign of God, which He affirmed was come already, and yet was still to come. Whether it be judged afterwards that it was a part of Christ’s *kenosis* and humiliation to participate in erroneous views of the age, or whether these apocalyptic utterances be regarded as authoritative for the belief of the Church, it is at least incumbent upon us to view them as exhibiting, in some measure, the faith which actually sustained Jesus during those final days of His Passion.

5. So far, our quest after the veritable words of Jesus has led us to acknowledge the influence upon His mind of contemporary Jewish eschatology; but, in order to perceive the full perspective of these apocalyptic ideas, our glance must flit rapidly over kindred thoughts embodied in pagan mythology and folklore. The *parousia*-idea has coloured the thoughts of many nations. The followers of Gautâma believe that Buddha will come again to consummate the redemption of mankind. According to the Hindus, Kalki, who is one of Vishnu’s impersonations, will come at the termination of the fourth age to destroy the depraved world and restore a new age of purity. The Roman

<sup>1</sup> Professor J. E. Carpenter, *The First Three Gospels*, p. 255.

people, in the second half of the first century, expected some great Saviour to come from the East, and many identified Vespasian with the Divine Hero. Similar apocalyptic notions were spread through Persia and Babylon. Hammurabi, whose "Code of Laws" has been rediscovered in recent times, was expected to come again; while the Zoroastrians believed that the strife between Ormuzd and Ahriman would be terminated by the intervention of some coming Saviour.<sup>1</sup> For many modern minds these and kindred phenomena of comparative hierology give new force and completeness to the critical work of Strauss, and seem to justify the conclusion that, "in fundamentals, Christism is but Paganism reshaped."<sup>2</sup> But the spear of Achilles can heal the wounds which it has made; instead of crudely acquiescing in the hypothesis that the New Testament writers borrowed from pagan mythology, we venture rather to conceive of the Christian religion as the fulfilment of universal human thoughts which spring out of definite instincts and needs of mankind. These widespread apocalyptic dreams betray an almost universal instinct; myths of the coming of some world-saviour to bring in the golden age of peace after judging mankind in righteousness, ought not to be treated as idle dreams and poetic illusions; they are, rather, the struggling embodiments of Divine Wisdom and the stammering utterance of ultimate truths. The existence of a Platonic "apocalypse" does not invalidate the Johannine Revelation; the Hindu expectancy that Kalki will be revealed in the sky, seated on a white horse, with a drawn sword in his hand, in nowise deprives of its cogency the Pauline symbolism, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." That mode of criticism which begins by stripping the sayings of Jesus of all their Jewish accretions, and then goes on further to subtract everything in His teaching which has an appearance of affinity with pagan mythology, is inherently wrong; and the more ruthlessly it is carried out, the farther is the mind borne away from the truth. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the universal instincts of human nature as certainly as He brought to their perfection the Law and the Prophets of the Hebrew race; He not only gave the world a perfect moral ideal in teaching and example, but He also vindicated and consummated the

<sup>1</sup> E. Clodd, *Myths and Dreams*; Monier-Williams, *Hinduism*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Robertson, *Pagan Christs*.



universal hopes of mankind for some reasonable dénouement to the drama of history in the Symbolism of the Apocalypse He delivered to His Apostles. Though it may be more congenial to European minds to dwell on the ethical message of Jesus which He expressed so perfectly in the assertion that "the Kingdom of God is within you," still it is our duty to study also His apocalyptic utterances, and seek to penetrate to the heart of these pictorial and symbolic representations of His abiding faith when He confronted the Cross.

6. When our Lord was leaving the temple for the last time<sup>1</sup>—perhaps on the evening of Wednesday of the Passion-week—one of His patriotic followers offered to escort Him over all the buildings of that national sanctuary, pointing out with patriotic pride the glory of the architecture and the accumulated wealth within. Whether Jesus accepted the proffered guidance, is not stated; but the Evangelist records that He warned the admiring disciples that however magnificent the temple was, speedily a time would come when "there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." With this word of doom on His lips, Jesus left His Father's House to return no more. He spent the night either at Bethany or on the Mount of Olives. As he was sitting on the Mount the next morning, His disciples—four of them privately, says St. Mark—recalled the word of doom, and inquired both when these things shall be, and what shall be the signs of their approach. St. Matthew distinguishes between His coming again and the end of the age.<sup>2</sup> Students of Old Testament prophecy who admit that Amos, Isaiah and their compeers were gifted with power to gauge the moral meaning and direction of the movements of national life, will not grudge the admission that Jesus possessed, in fuller measure, this moral insight and predictive power. The inspiration we attribute to the ancient prophets resolves itself into a temporary form of Divine incarnation, and the permanent incarnation we attribute to Jesus resulted at least in an abiding inspiration. For weeks and months prior to the closing in of His foes upon Him, Jesus uttered vaticinations both of His own death and of Jerusalem's awful fate, while out of the midst of this dark forecast He projected a splendour of

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiii. 1-4; Matt. xxiv. 1-3; Luke xxi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> παρουσία and συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος.



hope that even His most intimate disciples failed to understand. It seems impossible to deny Christ's recurrent prediction that Jerusalem, after wars and rumours of wars, should be besieged and so utterly destroyed that the beautiful temple should be razed to the ground. Such anticipations may be attributed to superior political sagacity. But our present concern is with the fact that Jesus did actually make such predictions; we are content to leave the question whether such knowledge was natural or supernatural. The image of "the abomination of desolation"<sup>1</sup> may have once denoted the Statue of the Olympian Zeus which Antiochus Epiphanes placed on the altar of burnt-offerings in the temple. The Lord Jesus may have used this phrase of vague terror once again, although St. Luke omits to mention it.<sup>2</sup> The period of catastrophe is personified as a travailing woman; war, earthquakes and cataclysms are some of the horrors accompanying her agony, which continues until the *Completion of the Age* is brought to birth. But it is in harmony with our general impression of Christ to point out that such predictions of the future did not spring from any motive of curiosity, but rather from a desire to prepare His followers for new forms of trial. The chief purport of His Apocalypse was to teach a rigorous ethic of loyalty and watchfulness; for, if that troubled and restless age found His disciples unprepared, the false prophets and Messianic pretenders who would arise might successfully lead them astray. Although His warnings might sleep in the ear for a time, the direful events would awaken and enlighten His predictions.

7. As we attempt to grope our way in the twilight of apocalyptic speech the thought is borne upon the mind that Jesus looked upon the Roman War as the beginning of the Completion of the Age, and that this is the epoch when the *parousia* is expected to begin;—but the "end" is not yet, "not immediately." The gospel of St. Matthew gives embarrassment at this point by assigning the "sign of the Son of Man in heaven to a period immediately ( *εὐθὺς* ) after the tribulation," although in an earlier verse<sup>3</sup> it is said, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come." Unless, therefore, we proceed to

<sup>1</sup> Dan. xi. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxi. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> xxiv. 14.

identify the *parousia* with Christ's Spiritual Presence in the world while the Gospel is being preached, we shall hold to St. Luke's version that Jesus, having spoken of wars and commotions and false Messiahs, added the important declaration, "but the end is not yet"; and further, having described the struggle between His disciples and the world, He affirmed, "and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." If this be the right exegesis,<sup>1</sup> then three things are clearly foretold—first, the destruction of Jerusalem and the accompanying disasters, when amid the religious and political unrest false Messiahs would arise; secondly, the final age, or times of the Gentiles, during which time the Gospel should be preached throughout the world; and, thirdly, the second coming of the Son of Man in power and glory—an end which should prove a new beginning. But we proceed with great caution and hesitation, even in distinguishing these three epochs of this Apocalypse. The late Professor Davidson stated, "Christ predicted His own death, from all we can gather plainly. But the prophecy of the end in Matt. xxiv. exactly resembles Old Testament prophecy. There is in it the same involution as we find in Joel, for instance, or in Isa. xl. 1-11. The near and the far are not separated; the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are both brought close together; just as, in Isaiah, the release from Babylon by Cyrus and the redemption from sin by the Messiah—the restoration to rest in Palestine and the final glorification of the Church—are combined in one. Hence much doubt has been thrown on Christ's prophecy by New Testament critics, who allege that we do not possess it as it came from Him, but as it was taken up by the disciples, and as it has passed through the mould of apostolic thought. There is no ground for supposing that New Testament prophecy should differ from Old. The similarity to Old Testament prophecy, however, is very remarkable; and as there is no reason to suppose it given to our Lord in vision, or the product of any mental excitation, we are led to infer that what is called "the timelessness of prophecy," or what is called otherwise "the perspective in prophecy," the close juxtaposition of things distant from one another, when both were also distant

<sup>1</sup> Vide C. A. Briggs, *The Messiah of the Gospels*, for an admirable discussion of this problem.

from the time or place of the seer, is not due to the fact that prophecies were given in vision."<sup>1</sup>

8. Before seeking our interpretation of this apocalypse, however, it is wise to ask how the idea of the *parousia* presented itself to the mind of Jesus Himself. What an easy escape from perplexing questions would be afforded if we could treat the external "signs" as merely the drapery of great, grand, spiritual ideas, and so dismiss the apocalyptic expressions as "the court-language of inauguration," describing simply the Spiritual return of the Christ after the Crucifixion! A favourite expedient adopted by many is to assume that the apocalypse of Jesus is purely pictorial, and then proceed to "spiritualize" this teaching by excluding every statement which does not accord with the saying, "The kingdom of God is within you." This prevalent mode of exegesis springs in part from a false delicacy or so-called spirituality, which resents every embodiment of ideas, and decries the material side of life in order to exalt the ideal. A world less gross than the one God has created would be needed to satisfy this superior order of minds. The disciples, indeed, may have misunderstood the prophetic words of Jesus, and mixed the remembrance of them with fragments of traditional apocalypses which belonged to contemporary Jewish thought. But, on the other hand, the main ideas of this apocalypse are not inherently improbable on the lips of Jesus. The chief conception is that of a great epoch-making advent; and, while it is expressed in magnificent imagery derived from current apocalyptic literature, it is still essentially spiritual in its character. The idea of a future *parousia* is not irrational, or something discordant with the progressive movement of the Divine Kingdom, which in the earlier Nature-parables of Jesus proceeded from forces inherent in the seed and soil. Since the history of God's Self-revelation has ever been marked by momentous crises and measured by great epochs—beginnings and culminations—there is nothing incredible in the belief that Jesus Himself stretched a hand through future years, and grasped the idea of His own Second Advent. The ancient prophets had familiarized the minds of men with ideas of a Day of the Lord—which theophany would be heralded by terrible phenomena of nature; when sun and moon would be darkened; when the stars would fall, and

<sup>1</sup> Professor A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 118.

the powers that are in heaven would be shaken: and mourning, the tribes of the earth would "see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."<sup>1</sup> The force of such prophetic teaching lay in the fact that it objectified the realities attested by the universal conscience of humanity. Such pictures of external judgement ratified the inward testimony of man's moral nature. Because this is so, it does not surprise us that the Gospels, which offer gracious pictures of the Divine Kingdom steadily growing as a field of corn, or developing as a tiny mustard-seed into a tree, also contain apocalyptic images of a grand yet terrible harvest, when the angels, who will be sent forth as reapers, will bind the wicked together and cast them into a destroying fire. Both phases of teaching were needed to express the Mind of Jesus—to articulate the moral truths of His unsullied conscience as adequately as He affirmed the evangel of Divine Grace from the testimony of His compassionate heart. Taking both the parables and the apocalypse of Jesus together, we infer that He anticipated a long period of development for the Kingdom of God, and ultimately a definite consummation. While His disciples were disqualified by a narrow nationalism from understanding a world-wide extension of the Messianic Ideal, Jesus looked forward to a universal reign, as the several evangelists testify. St. Matthew records that Jesus foretold that the tribes of the earth shall mourn and see the coming of the Son of Man; St. Mark states that He spoke of the Son of Man gathering His elect "from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven"; while St. Luke affirms that Jesus declared that the Gospel shall be preached to the Gentiles throughout the world. Now it is just this interval of development and Gospel-preaching which is minimized in the apocalyptic perspective; the very greatness of the idea that Jesus should come again dwarfed the importance of the intervening years.

9. But neither the Son nor the angels know the time of the Coming of the Son of Man; this is the Father's secret.<sup>2</sup> It is so alien to the imagination of the Church which worshipped Jesus as Divine to suppose that its Lord could be ignorant of aught that concerns the welfare of the Kingdom, that we cannot

<sup>1</sup> Joel ii. 1-10; iii. 15, 16; Isa. xiii. 6f.; xxiv. 18f.; Zech. xii. 10-14, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36.



do other than treat this as His own authentic confession. As this august event draws near, however, it will be announced by intelligible tokens, even as the coming of the summer is heralded by the opening leaves of the fig-tree. One most disconcerting difficulty in this Apocalypse, already alluded to, is Christ's announcement that "this generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished." It appears to us an instance of that "timelessness of prophecy" described by Professor Davidson, that the Second Coming is predicted to happen "*immediately*" after the tribulation (the siege of Jerusalem), and that the fulfilment of all the signs is anticipated in *this generation*.<sup>1</sup> This perplexing assertion ought not to obscure the plain fact that Jesus clearly foretold that He would return in triumph after the doom had fallen upon Jerusalem. And since our Lord's predictions of the beginning of the birth-throes in the seventh decade were literally fulfilled by the capture of the Holy City and overthrow of the temple, we might at least admit that the hope of the *parousia* may also prove to be something more than an "unsubstantial dream." However difficult it may prove to make the apocalypse of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds with all His holy angels, harmonize with our preconceived notions of graduated progress and with the spiritual intuitions of the moral nature of God's Reign, we must not, therefore, be deterred from admitting the strong probability that Jesus Himself was the originator of the hope of the Primitive Church that He would come again in that generation. It lies beyond our present sphere of duty to show the influence of that strange hope; but it may, at least, be defined as one of marked conserving effect in holding together the infant Society of Jesus amid the disintegrating forces of an antagonistic world. Our present attitude to the apocalyptic teaching of our Lord is to fasten simply upon the certainty that the great supernatural movement He began, which has had such a remarkable history in the past, will assuredly come to a glorious completion, when He shall sum up all the processes and present the Kingdom perfect unto His Father. But apart from abstract discussions about the authenticity of this apocalypse, it may be taken for granted that some of the forms of thought adapted to the age of Jesus' earthly ministry can hardly be an appropriate ethic for a world since then so changed.

<sup>1</sup> εὐθὺς ἢ γενεὰ αὐτῆς.



Some go even farther, and exaggerate this inference into a dogmatic rejection of all Christ's teaching; He was, they say, a dreamer of dreams, and His idyllic simplicity forms no example for us, while His doctrines prove inapplicable to the complexities of our new science and our economic and social problems. But to this extreme position we answer that Jesus got down to the real foundations of life, and treated only of what was essential and permanent in humanity. Had He taught science or economics, His words might, indeed, have proved perishable; but He enunciated the truths of man's spiritual relationship which abide for aye. Even the ethics of His Apocalypse have an applicability to all lives that are bounded by the uncertainties of experience. Through all apocalyptic obscurities, we discern clearly the beginning of a Kingdom of Righteousness, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; we also see certain fixed points in this great process, such as the fall of Jerusalem, the preaching to the Gentiles, and the final consummation when the Son of Man shall come again. Let us learn of St. Paul. He began by laying stress upon the apocalyptic eschatology of the Kingdom; but, as the years passed by and time corrected His mistaken anticipations, He dwelt ever more fully on the ethical realities and spiritual certainties of that mighty movement which began with Jesus of Nazareth. For ourselves, since Jesus said He will come again at the end of the present "world," we are constrained to believe that He will realize His own prophecy, although we know not how He will come. But whether we accept or reject the apocalypse, we may learn the lesson of vigilance and prayer: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man going abroad has left his house, after giving authority to his slaves, to each his work, and has commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch, then; for you know not when the owner of the house is coming: at evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning, lest he come suddenly and find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all, watch."

## CHAPTER III

### THE LAST SUPPER

I. WHILE in the foregoing discussions we have found many difficulties which no honest student dares to overlook, we shall now be led to acknowledge that nowhere do the discrepancies appear so insurmountably difficult as in the narratives of the Passion. Here we feel as men standing on some beach when the sea is caught in a stormy tumult, striving to peer through a dark, driving mist, and finding their vision dimmed, blurred and broken. Yet it may be said in anticipation, when we turn our scrutiny upon the main and ultimate fact of the Crucifixion we enter the realm of clearest, historic certitude. There is, indeed, a school of writers who trace this part of the Gospels to an origination of the sun-myth; and since it is not wise to seem altogether scornful of this phase of modern scepticism, we may quote from Dupuis, who will serve as a type of those who criticize Christianity from the standpoint of solar mythology. "Who is to redeem us from winter? The god of Spring, or the Sun, when it enters the constellation Aries, the Ram, that is the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. . . . The god of Day is the offspring of the winter solstice, born at the moment, on 25 December, when the day begins sensibly to wax. Mithras and Christ are born on the same day, the Sun's birthday: Mithras in a grotto, Bacchus and Jupiter in a cave, and Christ in a stable, or, according to some apocryphal Gospels, in a cave. The *magi*, priests of the Sun, worship the Saviour; a star, Astronomy being their science, acquaints them of the birth of the god; and this God, the Lord Jesus Christ, rests in the arms of the Heavenly Virgin (*Virgo Cælestis* of pagan cults), whose constellation rises on 25 December. Here the young God is combined with her: thus she bears him, remaining a virgin. The vernal equinox is the time when Christ triumphs and repairs what men have suffered by winter. The Easter feast is therefore called, among Jews and Christians, the feast of the Passover; for in the sign of the Ram, the rule

passes from the god of Darkness to the god of Light, and the star of Light, restoring life to Nature, reappears in our hemisphere. The spring feast, Easter, fell originally on 25 March. On the 23d Christ died, and on the 25th rose again. This death and this resurrection recur in all solar myths."<sup>1</sup> The best answer to this interesting hypothesis is, perhaps, to quote Tacitus, who, incidentally confusing Jews and Christians, tells us definitely that Christ "was put to death in the reign of Tiberius by Pontius Pilate the procurator, and that his religion, a deadly superstition (the Christians being characterized by their hatred of the human race), though crushed for a time, burst forth again, not only throughout Judæa, in which it arose, but even in Rome itself, the common sink of all infamy and wickedness."<sup>2</sup> The fact of the death of Jesus Christ has such corroboration that doubt of its historicity evinces only the eccentricity of the sceptic's judgement. And notwithstanding the many difficulties belonging to the New Testament narratives of the Passion, this fact stands out like some rocky promontory which refuses to be hidden or destroyed by the waves that dash against its base.

2. Having reassured the mind by directing its attention upon what may be regarded as one of the historic certitudes of Christianity, we shall now turn to the task of weaving into one whole the various testimonies of the several evangelists, holding the result to be simply tentative and corrigible by any subsequent gain of new light. Hitherto we have treated the Marcan tradition as the backbone of Evangelic History, distributing the *logia* and incidents contributed by the later writers as harmoniously as possible into that early framework of the narrative of Christ's Ministry. But when we come to the Passion, we are forced to admit the authority of St. Luke, who at this point treats the earlier gospel with considerable freedom. This Evangelist must have profited, both intellectually and spiritually, by his companionship with St. Paul, and from that Apostle's teaching his mind was first directed upon the Death of Jesus as the main act of a redeeming sacrifice: hence, he would spare no pains in investigating the unique and momentous occurrences

<sup>1</sup> Dupuis, "Origine de tous les Cultes," quoted by Ernest Crawley in *The Tree of Life*. Vide *The Four Gospels as Historical Records*, p. 492ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Annals*, xv. 44.

that culminated in the Cross. The Fourth Gospel also, in spite of many surprising omissions, renders most important aid to all who aim at reconstructing some mental images of the concluding scenes of the Ministry of Jesus. The author's aim was not primarily to give a chronicle of the incidents; and yet so familiar was he with the minutest details of time and place, that he never hesitated to modify various mistaken suppositions found in earlier traditions. Our method is not that of first setting forth all the inconsistent details of the four narratives, and then rashly inferring that it is now impossible to gain any approximation to certitude; but it is to use once again our impressionist plan of reading all the Passion-narratives—taking St. Luke's as our starting-point, observing all the discrepancies between this and others—and then, having allowed our minds to receive the composite impression, seek to reproduce the picture which has focused itself upon the retina of our minds.

3. As a result of this method of investigation, we conclude that at last the Sanhedrim had resolved to execute its long-cherished purpose of putting Jesus to death; although they had consented among themselves to endure Him yet a few more days, since any commotion at the Passover might give the Romans another opportunity for armed interference, such as would further menace national existence. It was in this brief interval of suspense, in the long duel between Jesus and the Jewish clergy, that Judas stepped out of the obscurity of discipleship into a dreadful prominence as the self-elected traitor. According to St. John's view, there was no alleviation of Judas's guilt by attributing it to sudden temptation; rather was it due to a gradual degeneration of character, his fidelity to Jesus having been shaken from the time of the apostasy of the political Messianists in Galilee. An exposure of this man's sordid meanness had been made at the anointing of the Master at Bethany, when our Lord's vindication of Mary's act had made it plain to him that such a Leader could never be the political Messiah he had hoped for. Then it was that for this man's mind the die was cast, and he resolved to secure himself from sharing in the miserable failure of Jesus, and even to make some profit out of it by treachery. St. John affirms that Judas had acted as treasurer of the disciple-band, and had been guilty of petty peculations, which fostered an ignoble greed that issued in an infamous act

of betrayal. When they were in doubt as to the best time and method of arresting Jesus, this disciple sought an interview with some of the members of the hierarchy, and broached to them his own dark scheme and its conditions. While the accounts we have of Judas's transaction and subsequent fate are very inharmonious, they cannot but leave the impression of the historicity of the betrayal. The suggestion has been thrown out that the mere remembrance of Zechariah's obscure prophecy may have been the real germ of the story; but it is hardly credible that a wholly fictitious narrative should have been invented, or that a legend so definite as this Judas narrative could have sprung from such an oracle; rather must it have been the fact itself that evoked the memory of the prophecy. It is not within the scope of our purpose to dwell further on the character of the traitor; Dante's estimate of the turpitude of his crime—placing the guilty man in the lowest depths of the *Inferno*—is probably a truer expression of the horror of his deed felt by the unsophisticated conscience than the modern attempts to explain away his guilt.

4. As we consider the steps leading to the Last Supper, we marvel at the disciples' lack of suspicion concerning Judas; the very suggestion of treachery came to them only a few hours before the betrayal with a shock of surprise. But Jesus had divined his falsity, and it may have been a wish to avoid any premature arrest which prompted Him to keep Judas and the other disciples in ignorance of the place where He intended to sup with them: hence, He gave the obscure commission to two of them to go and make provision. Such caution shows the insecurity of His feeling; and, although He had come back to lay down His life, He took every precaution against an abortive ending of His ministry. He felt an urgent desire to complete, as far as He could, His instruction of the Twelve before the end came. Supposing the great controversy with the leaders of the national religion to have taken place on a Wednesday—at the close of which day "He departed and hid Himself from them"—then the Thursday was probably spent in some retreat not far from the city. Considerable talent and erudite research have been exercised to explain the discrepancy between the Synoptists and St. John concerning this Supper. St. Mark states that the disciples were sent to prepare, "on the first day of unleavened



bread, when they sacrificed the Passover"; but in narrating the incidents of the subsequent trial, the fourth evangelist tells us that the Jews refrained from entering the Judgement hall when Jesus was tried by Pilate, desiring to avoid a defilement which would hinder them from participating in the Passover meal. The ancient law fixed the date of the Passover for the fourteenth of the first month between the evenings.<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew mode of reckoning the day was from sunset to sunset, so that their Friday would begin on the evening of our Thursday. Now, on the holy day of the Passover, no business would be transacted and manual labour would cease. St. Mark, however, relates that when Judas was expelled from the Last Supper, the other disciples imagined that he was sent out to make further purchases. Yet again, on the morning of the Crucifixion, when Jesus fell under the weight of the Cross, Simon the Cyrenian was encountered returning from work in the fields. We infer from these circumstances that Jesus may have availed Himself of a customary permission—granted probably to relieve the overcrowded city at such feasts—to anticipate the festal memorial of God's deliverance of Israel from bondage. If then we adopt the Johannine date (Nisan 14) rather than the Synoptic (Nisan 15), we must suppose that the Last Supper took place before the Paschal lambs were slain—a detail that would surely play a significant part in subsequent apostolic reflection which made Jesus the true Paschal Lamb. But while accepting St. John's statement as to the time, we may adhere to the Lucan account of the two "cups," inferring that the usual order of the *Pascha* was followed, and identifying the "thanks" of Jesus with the Jewish formula, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who hast created this fruit of the vine." The adequate treatment of this perplexing discrepancy might well be dealt with in a volume devoted exclusively to the elucidation of so great a difficulty; we only refer, in passing, to a puzzle which taxes the learning of our greatest scholars, in order that we may give some perspective to the central Figure which has so absorbingly engaged our attention. Our own meagre allusions to these intricate discussions do but suggest that one may look upon "the Lord's Supper" as an addendum to the Paschal meal made by Jesus before the disciples sang a part of the great Hallel.

<sup>1</sup> Ex. xii. 2; Lev. xxiii. 5; Num. xxviii. 16f.

5. A further word needs to be spoken about certain anomalies and discrepancies in the several accounts of that evening. St. Luke, for example, records the renewed rivalry and dispute among the disciples, but omits the exquisite story of our Lord's symbolic rebuke in washing their feet. As we study and compare St. John's gospel with the Synoptics, we are struck by a kind of duality or reduplication of similar incidents with marked differences: so that the question is forced upon our attention, whether these are not alternative and mutually exclusive accounts. Instead of an account of the Cæsarean crisis and Petrine confession, St. John relates the Galilean apostasy and the proved loyalty of the disciples; the Synoptics give us the institution of the Lord's Supper at the *Pascha*; but St. John relates earlier Christ's discourse on the bread which came down from Heaven. Instead of the agony of Gethsemane, the fourth evangelist relates how, when the Greeks sought Him, Jesus passed through a mental conflict and was comforted not by angels, but by a Heavenly voice. We believe that this striking reduplication of similar yet differing incidents arose from the wealth of tradition and reminiscence from which the several writers chose their materials to illustrate their respective aims. No little part of modern criticism seems based on the assumption that, if such reduplication does not show the unreliability of the several sources, at least it makes it necessary to treat the two series of resembling incidents as alternatives, so that if one be chosen as probable the other must be excluded. But this is not the sole solution; it is surely feasible that St. John's account is supplementary. In treating of the Passion-week, therefore, we shall assume the honest intent of the narrators, and, having made a conflation of the various lines of tradition, we shall let them make their composite reflection in our minds, exercising judgement in constructing a probable comprehensive imagination of the order of events and their significance.

6. It is possible that the earlier part of Thursday may have been spent by Jesus on the slopes of Olivet. Some time during the morning He sent two of His disciples into the city, directing them simply to follow a man whom they would see bearing a pitcher. It almost appears as though Jesus had previously arranged with some friend who remains unnamed that at a given message he should get ready the guest-hall for Him and

His disciples. Although offering this natural suggestion, we do not shut out all supposition that, in this instance and in many others, the Master may have foreseen what would occur by clairvoyance. Our method is rather to find an explanation along normal lines wherever possible, holding in view the possibility that many of these incidents may have been due to the use of supernormal powers in Jesus. The two disciples carried out their commission, followed the water-carrier to a certain house, and announced to the tenant that their Master's time was near. Thus, it fell out that none of the disciples, not even Judas, had discovered where Jesus intended to celebrate the feast until they arrived at the house. At eventide they reached the place assigned for their use, finding a large upper room furnished with couches and prepared for the meal. As we have intimated in the previous paragraph, St. Luke somewhat disconcerts his readers by placing an account of a contention that sprang up among the disciples immediately after the institution of the Sacrament. Harmony is brought into the narrative by a slight transposition, and by treating the incident as a genuine reminiscence of a dispute about precedence which occurred at the beginning of the evening. A quarrel as to which of them was looked up to as the greatest would account also for the foot-washing incident; the rankling of distrust and jealousy made each disciple unwilling to take the posture of a servant after their dusty walk. Seeing their mutual irritation, Jesus girded Himself with a towel, and taking a ewer of water, began to wash the disciples' feet. Whether He began with Judas or with John is not told; indeed, astonishment might well confuse the Evangelist's treasured memory of the incident: some of those who shared in that scene would never cease to wonder, and perhaps to weep, at every renewed recollection of it in after years. St. John relates how Simon impetuously refused at first to allow His Lord to wash his feet, feeling ashamed, no doubt, that their foolish rivalries had occasioned such humiliation for Him. In reply, Jesus carried all their thoughts beyond the mere outward act to the discipline of the spirit which they needed. With the baptism of repentance they had been washed once; now He would fain cleanse, not only the stains of travel from their feet, but also from their minds the soiled marks of anger, rivalry and pride. The Evangelist, who recorded the incident so many years after, prefaces it by the mysterious saying

that a motive for this acted parable was that Jesus knew "that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth unto God." The lowly act of Jesus was framed in profoundest mysticism; the washing of the disciples' feet was another step in that marvellous humiliation which, when viewed in the light of Eternity, appeared as a stately movement in the solemn drama of the Revelation of God's Son. It was the rebuke of all worldliness, expressed in an action of humility and love.

"You call Me Teacher and Lord,  
And you say rightly; for so I am.  
If I, the Lord and Teacher, then, have washed your feet,  
You also are bound to wash the feet of one another.  
For I have given you an example,  
That you also should do even as I have done to you.  
Truly, I tell you, truly,  
A slave is not greater than his owner,  
Nor is a Messenger greater than he who sent him."

7. Some general conception of the nature and course of the Jewish Passover-meal has been made familiar by the repeated accounts of distinguished scholars; and it is neither in our power nor purpose to add to, or modify, such knowledge. Our more modest aim is to gain a mental synthesis of the scene as a background for the action and converse of our Lord with His disciples; to catch, if possible, reflections of His changing moods with the trend and significance of His thoughts. With a single exception those followers reciprocated their Master's affection, and persisted in faithful attachment to Him throughout His temptations. While all of them had felt the powerful attractions of the political Messianism of the age, Judas alone had been seduced into detachment and treachery. After Jesus had washed their feet, He took His place at the head of the table, seating Himself between John and Judas. His Mind was full of the presentiment that the hour had come for Him to return to His Father, and He talked with those around Him of His own departure and their mission. Through all His pre-occupation, there shone the clear light of love for His disciples. "Love . . . bears it out even to the edge of doom."<sup>1</sup> Although under no illusion concerning the immediate future, Jesus claims to exercise a kingly prerogative, distributing among the Twelve the mediatorial offices of the Kingdom which His Father had

<sup>1</sup> Shakspeare, *Sonnet cxvi.*, quoted by Dr. Dods, *Expos. Gk. N. T.*, in loco.



appointed for Him. Thus He used His Jewish culture to take up the theocratic ideal as something realized in and through the spiritual Ministry of Grace and Truth which He delegates to His disciples on the eve of His foreseen Passion. St. John corroborates, in His own characteristic manner, the evidence of the Synoptists concerning the vice-regal duties of the apostolate. "Truly, truly, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."

8. But a sad dissonance entered into the Master's discourse, for He was sensitive to the alien and treacherous intents of Judas. Jesus read that disciple's mind, and perceived that the man had fallen a prey to a Spirit of Satanic malignancy. He had already entered into collusion with the enemies of Jesus, and was even at that very moment revolving the possibilities of betraying his Lord. The clear divination of these hostile intrigues burdened His speech with the presage and presentiment of coming doom, and at length His perturbation of mind culminated in the announcement, before all, that one of them was about to betray Him. Such a prediction must have been pervaded by a spirit of appeal, even though Jesus foresaw the relentlessness of the man by His side. Perceiving the immovability of Judas's dark design, the only alternative that remained was to expel him from the group, although this had to be done without exposing him to the anger and alarm of the others. All present were filled with consternation at our Lord's obscure but unmistakable announcement of betrayal, and severally asked, "Is it I?" Then when, at Simon's suggestion, John asked who the traitor should be, Jesus gave a token, which, whether comprehended by the inquirer or not, was plain to Judas himself. What dark thoughts were passing in the traitor's mind are unrevealed—fear, perhaps mingled with scorn; but there was no will to repent; and Jesus leant toward him and said, "What thou doest, do quickly." The others appear to have imagined that their Master was commissioning the treasurer of their banú to go out and complete the requisite purchases for the morrow. But the command reads to us as the cry of outraged Love. The wretched man stood unmasked, and before John or Simon could interrupt, even had they wished, he passed out into the night.



9. Judas's withdrawal gave relief to the sense of gloom which had oppressed them all, and a feeling of harmony was renewed. In the moment of relaxation from a tension which the Master Himself had shared in, He explained to His disciples why He had availed Himself of the permissive custom of anticipating the *Pascha*: it was because He foresaw that He will not have another opportunity of eating it with them, or of supping with them again until He sits down with them in a spiritual manner in a kingdom established by His own Crucifixion. On previous occasions it appears that Jesus had used the time of the "breaking of bread" for speaking freely of His Mission; but at this juncture the familiar meal becomes a sacrament of spiritual fellowship, and by an acted parable and solemn words He showed them the meanings of His death. It is difficult for us to understand the naturalness of the succeeding steps in that Memorable Supper, since we are inevitably influenced by the medium of ecclesiastical developments both of doctrine and ceremony. The institution of the sacrament is often thought of as taking place when Supper was ended; but if we accept the Lucan narrative of the blessing of two cups, then we shall be inclined to think of the whole of that Paschal meal as assuming a sacramental character. It will, perhaps, clarify our thoughts of the order of that meal if we quote Dr. Alex. R. Eager's summary of his convincing note on St. Luke's account. "(1) The disputed passage in St. Luke shows every mark, external and internal, of authenticity. (2) Its admission makes it necessary to believe that St. Luke speaks of the Consecration of two cups at the Last Supper. (3) St. Luke joins the declaration, and the words of blessing of the *first* cup with a similar declaration of our Lord's as to the whole feast. (4) There is no doubt whatever as to the *order* in which our Lord consecrated the loaf and the eucharistic cup. (5) The *first* cup preceded the feast, and was *not* eucharistic. (6) St. Paul's account *implies* the use of a cup before the eucharistic chalice; his omission of any reference to that cup is absolutely intelligible. (7) So, too, the omission of any similar *direct* reference, in St. Matthew and St. Mark, is intelligible; but both have an *indirect* reference, though misplaced. (8) By replacing their reference in its proper order, the whole account, derived from its four sources, is intelligible and self-consistent, and reveals the Scriptural truth of the tradition that is embodied in the order of

consecration and administration now used through all Christendom." <sup>1</sup>

10. Our earliest account of the Lord's Supper is that which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians some time between 50 and 55 A.D. Although the writing down of this account was delayed for more than twenty years, the Apostle may have received the tradition within a few months of the Crucifixion. The term "revelation," by which he describes it, applies less to the manner of its communication than to the nature of his insight into its meaning. Hence, it may be that our Pauline account is only another version of the Petrine tradition which St. Mark has embodied in his gospel. While we accept the fidelity of the Lucan narrative as to the actual fact of the two cups, we may omit further allusion to the first cup, as it was not eucharistic, and proceed to make our inferences from the four sources at our disposal. Before the Supper ended Jesus took bread, and having given thanks broke it, and gave it to His disciples with the words, "This is My body *for* you"; likewise the cup *after they had supped*, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." St. Paul states that after giving the bread, our Lord enjoined upon His disciples, "Do this in memory of Me"; and after the cup, "Do this as often as you drink it, in memory of Me." The Marcan version is simpler: "Take it, this is My body": "This is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for many"; and in this account we find no command to repeat the act. In St. Matthew, Jesus is represented as declaring the cup "is My blood of the covenant shed in reference to many in order to remission of sins." The Lucan account formally records the command to repeat the sacrament, "Do this for a recollection of Me." Some have conjectured that this imperative preserves the Church's subsequent interpretation of the sacrament as a permanent institution, since Jesus probably designed no literal repetition of this rite any more than He desired a literal imitation of the washing of the feet. Dr. Briggs, however, suggests that this command was a post-Resurrection word of Jesus; but there is too little evidence wherewith to verify this hypothesis. The question springs to our minds, however, Does not the exalted self-consciousness we find in Jesus in these last days make

<sup>1</sup> *St. Luke's Account of the Last Supper: a Critical Note (Expositor, March and April, 1908.)*

it inherently probable that He actually intended to establish a permanent institution? Should the command to repeat the new *Pascha* be accepted as authentic, still we must not transform the simple "do this"—"perform this"—into a sacrificial injunction to "offer this": it is to be a repetition of communion, of commemoration, but not of priestly sacrifice. Amid all the fluctuating elements of the fourfold record, two incidents are common alike in all: first, the giving of the broken bread after thanks had been uttered and the declaration had been made, "this is My body"; secondly, the passing of the cup with the assertion that it was the blood of the (new) Covenant shed on behalf of many—or, for His disciples.

II. Even in the most cursory review of the great subject of our Lord's institution of this sacrament, it is a matter of felicitation to the whole Church that the *Didache* can be relied upon to reflect the primitive mind of the Christian Societies. This book was one of the first manuals of Christian praxis treating of morality, worship, organization and the Second Coming. If it be admitted that the Teaching "represents the low-water mark of Christian feeling and speculation," then we argue from this that the very poverty of its thought but makes it a more trustworthy mirror of the conduct of the Church. Now, under the head of "Christian Worship," it is taught that the Eucharist was a part of a social-religious meal, and we learn that communicants were accustomed to eat till they were satisfied. "As regards the Eucharist, celebrate it thus: First, for the cup: We thank Thee, O Father, for the Holy Vine of David, Thy servant, which Thou madest known to us by Jesus, Thy Servant. To Thee be glory for ever! And for this broken bread: We thank Thee, our Father, for the light of knowledge, which Thou madest known to us by Jesus, Thy Servant, To Thee be glory for ever. As this broken bread was scattered (in corn-grains) on the mountains, and being brought together became *one*, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the end of the Earth into Thy Kingdom."<sup>1</sup> The simplicity of the ritual prescribed in this Jerusalem manuscript contrasts with the subtle ingenuity which has transformed this spiritual and social communion into an elaborate sacrifice offered again to God by the hands of the priests. Yet far-removed as the ecclesiastical dogma is from

<sup>1</sup> *Didache*, ix. and x.

the naïveté of the primitive love-feast, we should not fall into the reactionary extreme of those who allow no room for either growth or change in thought and worship. The fact confronts us that the mind of the Church wrought upon this commemorative covenant meal, and built upon its sacramental basis a veritable philosophy of life. The doctrines of Jesus have stimulated the Church's illative faculty, and throughout this high work there has been given the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. Since we dare not say that the philosophic impulse should have been excluded from the Church, neither ought we therefore to check its exercise at any particular stage, and say the development of Christian thought can go no farther. Stagnation is our gravest peril; dogmatic petrifications are our worst idols. But our thinking should be reverent, sympathetic, imaginative, and yet faithful to the sources. Reviewing the past developments from the primitive simplicity of the *Didache* down to the construction of the elaborate dogma of transubstantiation, we see the incessant need of sympathetic imagination. Those reformers who throw such emphasis upon the verbal copulative "is," and those critics who dispute whether any copula was used in the Aramaic original, all seem alike remote from the mood and thought of Jesus when He employed types and symbols that sanctified the whole of human life. Even such as repudiate sacerdotalism as a spurious excrescence upon pure Christianity, ought to acknowledge that the conception of nature and life taught by Jesus, in word and act, was essentially sacramental.

12. It is generally acknowledged, by all who take time to think about it, that the Master summed up the chief message of His whole ministry in the poetic symbolism of this sacrament. From the hour of His self-identification with the penitents who received baptism in the Jordan until the evening when He washed His disciples' feet—or, from the moment of His taking up of John's watchword of the Kingdom to the instant of His declaration, "This is My body," He had uninterruptedly manifested the perfection of love as a principle and dynamic of all true life; He was absolutely dominated by love for the Heavenly Father and for man, so that every decision of His Will was a death unto all selfishness and a rising again of His nature in fuller amplitude of power for service. His serene acceptance of tragic death made that event the sublimest expression of His spiritual love.



He gave Himself as bread to be broken for the nourishing of the higher life of the world, knowing that by His voluntary death the very spirit of His life would be appropriated by all His disciples. But this metaphor of assimilation must be interpreted through the great keyword found in Christ's assertion that the cup was the (new) Covenant in His blood.<sup>1</sup> This was the word with which Jeremiah anticipated an evangelical religion six centuries before, so that its use in this place transports the mind into the midst of Hebrew conceptions. "The fundamental redemptive idea in Israel, then, the most general conception in what might be termed Israel's consciousness of salvation, was the idea of its being in covenant with Jehovah."<sup>2</sup> Taking up this symbolism, Jesus used the bread and wine to represent His own spirit and life, claiming that the new covenant was realized and established in Himself. And this assumption was verified, for He did actually introduce His disciples into a Divine fellowship, a holy communion, wherein they were made partakers of the Divine Nature. "In that He saith a *new* covenant, He hath made the first old; but that which is becoming old is nigh unto vanishing away." The ancient covenant dating back to Moses and Sinai has become obsolete through Christ, and by the act of dying, which He symbolically anticipates, a new, spiritual covenant supersedes all fleshly or external ordinances forever. He would not have His disciples look upon His death as some tragic, unforeseen failure: nay, He made it the crowning act of His obedience to the Father's Will; and for all time the Cross abides as the seal of the Kingdom and the chief instrument for its extension. St. Matthew's particular inference, that the shedding of His blood was an efficient cause of the remission of sin was an inevitable deduction from the gracious, extensive effects accruing from the self-sacrifice of Jesus.

13. Were we seeking to draw out the profound implications of this institution of the Lord's Supper, we should at once connect it with the mystical discourse on the Bread which cometh down from Heaven; but our aim here is to set the incident in the true perspective of Christ's Ministry, so that it will yield up its inner meanings to subsequent reflection. Whether we imagine that Jesus designed the continual repetition of this

<sup>1</sup> *Diatheke-Berith.*

<sup>2</sup> Professor A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 239.



*Pascha*, or attribute its place in the Church to the instinctive love and reverence of the disciples; whether we suppose the Master gave the command to keep it as a memorial after He had risen, or regard its persistence as due to the evolution of ritual and dogma,—we ought never to lose the historical view of the simple pathos and sublime poetry of this the penultimate act of Jesus in the days of His flesh. Those symbols of the Bread and Wine expressed His triumphal assurance that His death would sanctify and not destroy His relationship to men. We are therefore bidden, at each celebration, to recollect Him whose Death affects all men's covenant with God; to renew our fellowship with the Risen Lord, and to look forward to His glorious return. While we rejoice in this new *Pascha*, we are to look for its more joyous consummation in the Father's Kingdom, when, in some fuller and more perfect manner, our Lord will join with us in a festal communion of completed triumph. Seen in its own light apart from all cloudy speculations, or recalled in reverent communion, this Sacrament with which Jesus Himself anticipated and interpreted His death, wins upon our hearts, whelms the mind with humility and grace, and imparts the realization of a mystic consciousness of Christ's pure and perennial Presence. And, as we retrace the steps in this impressionist study, we are led to believe without reservation in the historicity of this tradition; for in the refinement of its pathos, its simple yet sublime poetic conception, and its potency as a Sacramental communion, we contemplate an act of religious inspiration. In other connections we should say genius, for the creation of which no apostle—not even Paul—was equal. Like so much else in the Gospels, it rises clean above the level of apostolic invention, so that we are driven to say, the Mind of Jesus alone can explain this institution.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE VALEDICTION

I. A GRAVE difficulty felt by all critical readers who accept the substantial historicity of St. John, is to find room in the Synoptic scheme of the Passion History for an interpolation of a farewell discourse such as appears in the Fourth Gospel. Yet notwithstanding this perplexity it seems not incredible that Jesus, foreseeing His speedy Crucifixion, should use the Paschal meal-time for intimate discourse with His disciples, in which He might lead their minds onward from the simpler phases of religion toward the profounder implications of their relationship to Himself. If, as Professor Burkitt states, "the doctrine of the Person of Christ set forth in this Gospel expressed the general conviction of the Church adequately," then we must infer that, since every effect requires a cause, something must have been present in Christ's remembered instructions which promoted the growth of these transcendental views of His Person. That our Lord's valediction was composed of sayings relating to the actual circumstances and needs of the hour alternated with winged flights into heavenly altitudes of mysticism, is inherently probable; while the pathos, beauty and range of vision displayed in the recorded discourse fit naturally with the majestic impression Jesus had continually and increasingly made upon His followers. Subsequent reminiscences of this final discourse would depend upon the disciples' understanding; for, although those men would be lifted far above themselves, there must have been much they could not grasp, and memory naturally loses hold upon sayings which outspan the intelligence. And it is easily perceived that such a discourse, full of delicate insights and lofty spirituality, would not be likely to find a place in the ordinary streams of tradition from which the earlier Gospels were largely formed. Yet, if there were one of that disciple-band more attuned than his companions to the music of the Master's mind, he would be likely to recall, in brooding meditations, all the last great thoughts of Jesus; and, as the years passed, he might naturally

seek to perpetuate his glowing memories. And if in such a work of his old age the author breathed the tones of his own cherished and dominant ideas, still the historicity of his work would not necessarily be weakened. Ecclesiastical tradition, which is far from worthless, points to John as such a disciple, whether he were the son of Zebedee or some pupil of the Sadducees. His intellect and heart were saturated and dyed with the influence of Jesus, but inevitably his later memories of his beloved Lord were all coloured by characteristics of the thoughts that had mastered him. This man's delineation of the Christ who lived in his memory was bound to differ from the Jesus depicted by earlier evangelists; and yet, as the Socrates of Xenophon and of Plato is one and the same through all differences, there is an identity even more real behind the presentations of Jesus made by the Synoptics and St. John.

2. The actual facts that succeeded the Crucifixion reflect an air of utmost credibility upon the Johannine conception of Christ as one possessing unique autonomy and masterful purpose. Had Jesus been able neither to foresee the course events would follow nor take steps to perpetuate the fellowship of His disciples, then He could not have created such an impression as the Gospels preserve; nor could He have inaugurated the movement from which Christendom has sprung. St. John himself records the self-evident motive for the farewell discourse in the words of Jesus: "I have spoken of these things to you that you may not be made to stumble . . . that when the hour for them comes, you may remember that I told you of them. I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you." It is surely no valid objection to the authenticity of this Valediction that it differs from previous discourses: the occasion accounts for such difference; besides, the Master's teaching was bound to be graduated, and His deepest instructions were necessarily delayed to the end of His Ministry. The sense that His Paschal address was a "farewell," gave the turn to all His speech and wrought distress among His disciples. They felt that the old habits of the Galilean intercourse were about to be abandoned forever; they saw the foundations of their cherished Messianic hopes crumbling away, and trembled at vague presentiments of gloom. Jesus speaks now of the nature and functions of genuine discipleship, passing beyond the tragedy of the Cross to

the days of high duty and witness-bearing in the world. Although He sorrowed at Judas's treachery, still He showed a serene assurance that the Divine Purpose would be fulfilled thereby, and set before His followers their new charge, with mysterious promises of spiritual equipment.

3. When, however, the general historicity of Christ's Valediction has been acknowledged, another problem presents itself in the apparent dislocation of the verses. Some readers will doubtless insist that the present sequence is due to St. John, and therefore must be correct; they look upon the abrupt termination of the first part<sup>1</sup> and the unexpected prolongation of the discourse as due to some actual interrupting occurrence, which was followed by a new direction of thought and conversation. On the other hand, it will seem to some that any transposition of chapters or verses which results in renewed harmony and increased light ought to be accepted. Should not the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters be placed immediately after the words that relate Judas's departure? Wendt suggests that they be placed after ch. xiii. 35, and Moffatt thinks still better after ch. xiii. 31a. Plain it is, at least, that the remark which Jesus made,<sup>2</sup> that no one of the disciples asked where He was going, could not have been made after Simon's question,<sup>3</sup> "Lord, where art Thou going?" And the concluding words of ch. xiv., "Arise, let us be going hence," appear to belong to the termination rather than to the middle of the discourse. It is not, however, an utter impossibility that our Lord should have spoken the allegory of the Vine *after* rising from the Supper, either before, or after leaving the room. Further surprise is occasioned by the sense of retrospection which pervades the Consecration Prayer of the seventeenth chapter: it reads as though the Crucifixion and Resurrection lay behind it, so that one naturally wonders if it may not have been spoken at some interval between the Resurrection and Ascension.<sup>4</sup> Whether such rearrangements of the materials of this section of St. John's gospel be made, or the present order of the text be retained, there is apparent to all a marked agreement of its teaching with the apostolic doctrine at the beginning of the Church's history. At this crisis of His Ministry, then, Jesus Himself created the moulds of a new religious con-

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xvi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> xiii. 36.

<sup>4</sup> This suggestion is made by Briggs.

sciousness, or the material of His history has been modified by the subsequent beliefs of the apostles. Now, while we admit the native tendency of the mind to read its own inferences back into the remembrance of the Teacher's thought, and are willing to allow for its influence in helping to shape the ultimate forms of evangelic tradition; we surely cannot accept any hypothesis as satisfactory that leaves the sudden emergence of the apostolic doctrine of the Person and Work of Jesus as a fact and effect without any intelligible cause. The Gospel which was centred in the Person of Jesus did not come as a bolt from the blue: even the Pauline Christology was not revealed from heaven at a stroke; but it issued from the concrete history of Jesus, and because it was believed there was a motive for the rise and transmission of the traditions concerning Him. How intelligible the whole subsequent history becomes, therefore, if we believe that, at the supreme crisis of His mission, just immediately before He was crucified, Jesus gathered His disciples together and imparted to them such final and consummating doctrines as St. John records in this Farewell Discourse, thus crowning all His previous self-revelations with a full explication of his life, thought and purpose! The transcendentalism of this valediction, which is a cause of offence to many a critic, is really the best explanation of the mysterious influence of Jesus upon the world after He was crucified.

4. The illusive hopes, that Jesus would prove Himself to be a political Messiah, had all been banished from the mind of Judas; but unhappily, in his case no spiritual ideal had taken their place, and when he saw that Jesus perceived his incorrigible baseness and desired him to leave the disciple-group, he went out determined if possible to make his own place secure in the coming *débâcle* of the movement Jesus had initiated. Deeply wounded though the Master was by the infidelity of Judas, He at once sought to heal the breach in the disciple-group by laying emphasis upon their abiding unity with Himself. Prophets and psalmists had conceived of Israel as the Kingdom of God under the figure of the vine which Jehovah had planted, and they had strained the capacity of language to set forth the future of this vineyard. Jesus now lays His consecrating touch upon this figure of the vine, and appropriates it for ever as the symbolism of the unity and fruitfulness of the fellowship which the disciples



have realized under the spell of His Personality. Jesus is the genuine Vine; His disciples are the branches: the roots, stem and branches are all joined in organic unity; severance at any point would put an end to all fruitfulness. The disciples are in Christ as branches in the vine; Christ is in them as the living sap flowing through the branches. The Heavenly Father is the Vine-dresser; fruitless branches like Judas He lops off; fruitful branches—loyal disciples—He prunes and disciplines, that they may become more fruitful. In the Galilean discourses, Jesus had uttered the parables of the Sower and the Seed, of the Tares and the Mustard-seed, of the Leaven and the Drag-net: but now all other figures give place to the old yet ever new symbol of the Vine. The Israel after the flesh is lost sight of; for here, in this disciple-group around Jesus, is the true seed of the nation—a Spiritual Israel, the true Vine which God has planted. In speaking this parable, Jesus pierces through the rind of phenomena—that external sphere wherein separateness and aloofness of one from another seem to be the conditions of life; He points to the mysterious network and ground of spiritual existence in which all personal life must be rooted. At the centre of such personal unions is Jesus Himself as the very root and stock out of which they grow. Though He will soon be withdrawn from the disciples as a physical presence, He will still be bound up with them in the New Kingdom. In the symbolism of the Vine every mind will find meanings according to its own depth and capacity; but to one and all the figure is an emblem of Christ's unbroken communion with His disciples on earth. Thus, on the eve of His anticipated crucifixion Jesus looks calmly forward to an abiding relationship with His disciples, which implies the continuous impartation and projection of His own life in and through them. In this mystic radiance the Heavenly Christ is seen to live on forever in His followers; and at every new exigency and demand of experience He will feed their life with the Divine energies of His own soul.

5. This connection of the disciples with Christ is conditional upon the indwelling of His words—teachings, commands and truths—in them. As the thoughts of Jesus are unfolded in this farewell address, it is shown that the abiding of Christ's words in the disciple is equivalent to the disciple's remaining in His love; and this, again, is equated with the keeping of His com-

mandments. Only through this mutual indwelling—reciprocal affection and moral obedience of the disciples to the Lord—can His joy become theirs. That joy was born of self-sacrifice; it could exist even in the midst of the agony of Gethsemane. All through His ministry, Jesus was animated by love for His disciples; and now He tells them that, if they have received His love, so that in them it is become an active principle of intercourse, then they have a bond of union and a guarantee of continuance which will more than supply the lack of His physical presence. They dimly perceived that Jesus was offering consolation for the deprivation of His bodily presence, and yet all the time they were hoping that He would not leave them. His next thought, however, jarred upon all their illusions; for He tells them that the trial of discipleship would grow in intensity through persecution, but that in this also He would be their pattern, for as the world hated Him so it would hate them. Men will misunderstand them, excommunicate them from the synagogue—yea, even kill them, and think that by doing so they are performing religious service to God. Jesus gives, as the motive of His predictions, the desire that they may remember when these things happen that He had told them. If He did not foretell these things to His disciples, then the writer of these words must have deliberately and consciously invented them. Hitherto, Jesus says, He had been with them and it had been unnecessary to tell them these things, but now He is going away. He remarks upon their strange silence; it surprises Him that they do not ask whither He is going! Henceforth His discourse is filled with the thought of His impending departure, and as they listen to His words they begin to evince their great sadness. Jesus had weaned them from their old ways; He had awakened their distrust in the guidance of conventional Jewish teaching; He had wooed and won their trust in Himself; and now, when His work has scarcely got beyond its beginning, He talks of going away. Seeing that He has grieved and perplexed them, Jesus seeks to comfort them with the promise of another Paraclete—the Spirit of Truth, who will come to them as the inward guide. There is an advantage in this withdrawal of the Master's visible presence; for, had He remained with them forever, they would not have grown out of childhood into the religion of manhood. The work He had begun would not cease; it would indeed be changed in character, but it would pass on to maturer

developments under the Spirit who "will convince the world of sin, and of uprightness, and of condemnation." The Loving Master fain would have told them new and higher truths, but He sees that further experience is needed to prepare them: hence, He promises that the Spirit of Truth will instruct them. The matter and theme of the Spirit's pedagogy will be the historic life and teachings of Jesus Himself; the Paraclete will draw out in their minds the inevitable inferences of Christ's doctrines: "He shall glorify Me, for He shall take what is Mine and disclose it to you." "All that the Father has is Mine: hence, I said, He takes of what is Mine and shall disclose it to you." Jesus felt that He had not exhausted the well of truth; He had simply opened it, cleared away obstructions, that men might drink therefrom. The few brief years of His incarnate ministry would wield an abiding influence upon His disciples, and would afford a body of historic truth which the other Paraclete would use for human enlightenment. Those disciples were shaken as by an earthquake; the thin crust of the earth's surface was broken; but, peering into the deep crevasse of mystery, they caught gleams of eternal reality. The vagueness of the promise of guidance and teaching through the Spirit within the disciples appears to open up dangerous realms, where mirage and illusion may shed false gleams; but while we discern the dangers made so manifest in Church History, we must still hold to the validity of this great promise. Especially ought it to be remembered that the Spirit of Truth guides the disciples not merely to fuller knowledge of doctrine, but also to greater energy of virtuous action; and the strenuous activity of the good-will of Christ's disciples will shield them from the peculiar dangers of illusive intellectuality.<sup>1</sup>

6. The very sadness of the occasion tended to rob life of its zest, and to depress the normal alertness of their minds; and, seeing this, Jesus sought to excite their curiosity by an unforgettable paradox: "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me; because I go to the Father. They said therefore, what is this that He saith, a little

<sup>1</sup> Sanday, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, "The Holy Spirit is the bond which binds all humanity together in one. In each one of us He is present after our measure, but in Christ He dwelt as the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (p. 310).

while? We cannot tell what He saith." Jesus meets their alarm and distrust with a prediction that their sorrow at His withdrawal will only seem like the travail-pangs of a woman, which at the birth of the child pass into joy. Separation will be followed by reunion! The withdrawal of the physical presence shall be followed by a new perception of His spiritual indwelling; they shall lose Him from sense and find Him in their souls. Unto His disciples would be given the manifestations of the Spirit; they shall see Him who is invisible; the old relations between the Lord and His disciples will give place to new and deeper realizations; He will be more to them than ever. "Up till now you have asked nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive that your joy may be complete." He gives His name, His personal character, His abiding life, as the dynamic and inspiration of prayer. The use of His name is no exercise of a magical formula; it signifies identity in aim and desires between disciple and Lord. His earthly life was as a journey; God was its starting-point and its goal: "I came out from the Father, and I have come into the world: again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father." His awed listeners catch at this saying, as affording them illumination:

"Behold, now Thou art talking openly and speaking no proverb:<sup>1</sup>  
 Now we know that Thou knowest all and requirest no one to question  
 thee;  
 Hereby we believe Thou camest out from God."

Their enthusiasm, though baffled and depressed, was ready to spring forth again at the slightest solicitation; but the Master steadies them by allusion to the coming crisis, which will scatter all His followers.

7. The remainder of this Valediction falls into four sections, divided naturally by questions asked respectively by Peter, Philip, Thomas and Judas; and the appositeness of the several queries to the known characters of at least three of them gives a ring of historicity to the dialogue. When Simon asks, "Lord, where art Thou going?" Jesus replies that His disciple is not prepared to follow now, though the time will assuredly come when he will be so. With characteristic vehemence Simon protests that he is ready to lay down his life for his Lord even now; but Jesus

<sup>1</sup> παροιμία.



deprecates this headlong zeal, and warns him that in a short time he will deny Him thrice. The Master has no wish to dash their hopes to the ground, nor to overwhelm them with self-suspicion; He cherishes an almost paternal affection, and seeks to comfort them with words of immortal expectancy. He is about to pass to another abode in His Father's house; He has not deluded them; the movement of life has its definite goal; He will withdraw in order to still pursue His mediatorial ministry under other conditions, and at the proper hour He will return to guide them home. He is saying that they know the way, when Thomas interrupts with a profession of ignorance even of their destination, and a half-remonstrant question, "How then are we to know the way?" The images of locality fit in with the movement of life, and Jesus affirms: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father except through Me." His Ministry had not the characteristic of aimlessness. Jesus moved across our history with the unwavering tread of one who knew His destination; He came from God, He went to God.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto He had been an external Teacher: henceforth they will treat Him as the personal way of God in the world. In the sphere of His influence, His disciples will live; along His way of self-sacrifice they will walk Godward. The very truth for which men hunger was embodied in Him; He was a springing fountain of spiritual life for the world. Hearing the repeated name of Father, Philip asks for some theophany, such as Moses received—some definite, tangible manifestation of God. Through the obscurity and confusion of such a request, there glows the fervid spiritual aspiration of a noble soul; but Philip has to learn that all material disclosure such as his fancy depicted would leave the deepest longing unsated. Jesus was grieved that Philip should show so little understanding of His Ministry, and makes the memorable answer that through His own life God is unveiled to man: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

8. Once more the Master seeks to make them feel that they share His mission, that they must perpetuate His works. He promises also that He will do in the future whatsoever they ask in His Name, so that even "greater works" shall be done; it will be the Lord Himself acting in them, and through them

<sup>1</sup> Hort, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, lect. i., p. 12



by His Spirit. Let them not be as a vessel rocked by a storm; though He is going away His *alter ego*, the Paraclete, will come; for this Spirit is truly the Spirit of Christ Himself. Instead of mourning, they ought to rejoice that He is going to His Father, and that He will receive again the glory of His pre-incarnate state. These words will seem to many too profound and technically theological to have come from the lips of Him who uttered the gracious parables in Galilee; and yet there is neither contradiction nor incompatibility, only a fitting development of ideas and of Christ's self-revelation. It would have been futile to have spoken in this manner at any earlier time; but if the Church had to be established and given a permanent consciousness, there was a propriety in such utterances at this crisis; and further, such sayings alone explain all the events that followed; for there is fullest harmony between cause and effect. The coming of the Spirit will be Christ's own return, so that though they miss His bodily presence, they shall contemplate Him in a way that the world will not understand. Judas Lebbæus feels the bewilderment which springs from the invincible materialism of the popular Messianism, and asks how Jesus will appear to the disciples while He remains unseen by the world. The Master answers the thought rather than the words of the question, and defines the conditions of love and obedience by which the disciples shall experience this vision of the Invisible. Even though the customs and habits of the old association be dissolved, Jesus promises to sustain them in a higher relationship with Himself and the Father through the Spirit. When His little bark—the Church—is heaving in the dreadful tempest, Jesus makes the great bequest of peace; He expresses the confidence of victory on the eve of seeming defeat; then brings His discourse to a close with the command, "Rise, let us be going hence!"

9. Our minds are imbued with wonder and awe at these revelations; and, if one be convinced that these sayings are genuine, he spontaneously and instinctively bows the knee to this Victorious Christ. And if they be not considered genuine, how shall we account for them? The death of Jesus did not dissolve His society;—it remained and grew in spite of all opposition; and its development was not due alone to the propaganda of ideas, but also to the contagion of a new force of

social love generated by the abiding Person of Christ. The apostles acted under the conviction that they were guided and energized by the indwelling Paraclete; the members rejoiced in the faith that Jesus had risen from the dead, and after "a little while"—an interregnum of forty days—had come again as the Spirit of Truth. The historic consequences throw an air of probability over the antecedents as they are recorded by St. John in the tender, last Farewell of Jesus before His Crucifixion. That only one disciple should have transmitted the continuous narrative of these holy truths spoken by Jesus before the final crisis, is not too difficult to understand; for even that disciple could only slowly master the meaning of the things which belong to this consummation of Christ's self-disclosure. As he brooded over his holy memories and the experiences of life deepened and refined his soul, the dark and almost forgotten sayings leapt out in His Mind like words of flame. And if Christ be what this Fourth Gospel affirms Him to be, there is no difficulty in believing that He gave utterance to such truths as these; but if He be not such an one as the Evangelist depicts, then we have no key either for this final discourse or for the Jesus of the Synoptics. It is easier for us to believe that the last words of the Master recurred to the mind in proportion as the disciple's understanding of Him grew through years of experience, than to attribute to some anonymous scribe the capacious intellect to create such thoughts, and the doubtful morality of assigning them to the utterance of Jesus.

BOOK IX  
THE FINISHED WORK



## CHAPTER I

### THE HOUR AND THE CUP

I. THE final scenes of our Lord's Ministry are so tragic and replete with importance for our World, that innate reverence prompts us to touch with much restraint upon the sacred mystery of a great sorrow. Yet, on the other hand, the habit of unflinching interrogation, which is one of the characteristics of the mind's insatiable hunger for truth, compels us to treat the records of the Lord's Passion critically before we strive to make a synthesis of the discrepant traditions. It should not surprise us to discover that our several sources contain data that are difficult to harmonize. The apostles who must have played so large a part in originating the several lines of testimony and tradition were not calm, scientific observers of the Passion; they were men caught in the eddies of a great movement, whose meaning and issues they were unable to discern; and the inevitable note of personal interest enters into their witness. But numerous and difficult as their discrepancies seem to us, the several gospels irresistibly assure the reader that he is in touch with a solid, reliable basis of fact, and the resultant impression of the figure of the Man of Sorrows conveys its own convincing historicity. One of our difficulties arises so soon as we make the transition from the serene Speaker of the Valediction to the agonized Sufferer of the Garden. But this very difficulty, which meets a merely literary criticism, attests itself to dramatic insight as inherently probable. We have already observed the remarkable parallelism of the Johannine and Synoptic records, and have suggested that the resembling yet different series of events in the Fourth Gospel ought not to be excluded as incompatible with the earlier narratives, nor identified as the same incidents which have been changed in transmission, but may be looked upon as a reliable supplement drawn out of the wealth of veritable apostolic reminiscence. And now we may preface our impressionist study of the arrest of Jesus by an enumeration



of some of the remaining difficulties that cling to the Passion narratives. The Lucan agrees with the Johannine account of the Master's warning of Simon's fall, placing it in the midst of His discourse before they left the supper-chamber; but in this both differ from St. Matthew and St. Mark. Again, the Synoptists disagree among themselves in the grouping of the disciples in the Garden and in regard to Christ's reiterated prayer. St. Luke, for instance, makes no mention of the three-fold repetition of the prayer, while, although the earlier evangelists have represented the disciples in two companies, the chosen three of the inner group being nearer to our Lord in His agony, St. Luke records the remonstrance about their sleeping when He desired them to watch, as though it were addressed alike to all the eleven. Some differences, however, are not so discrepant, but add fresh shades of meaning to a more meagre report: thus, in the slackened intensity of the second stage of struggle and prayer peculiar to St. Matthew, we seem to trace the passing of the soul's first instinctive revolt into a gradual acceptance of the sorrow as a part of the Divine plan. There are also some characteristic touches in St. Luke's account, such as the movement of Jesus in advance of His disciples, the explanation that they slept "for sorrow," and the statement that Jesus restored the wounded ear of Malchus. The same Evangelist, although in other parts of His gospel he has softened some of St. Mark's realism, here accentuates Christ's humanity with the description of His agony in prayer, that "His sweat became, as it were, great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." Yet a further addition made by St. Luke is the statement that there were chief-priests, commanders of the temple, and elders in the crowd that came out to arrest Jesus. St. John ventures to give the name of the "bystander" who resorted to the sword in defence of the Master, and we learn that it was no other than Simon Peter; while the same author affirms that a cohort, or detachment of Roman soldiers, came to ensure the arrest and prevent disorder. St. John alludes to the presence of Judas, but remains silent concerning the traitor's kiss. He attributes to Jesus an initiative in the mode of His arrest, noting that He stepped forward with the question, "Whom do you seek?" This Evangelist alludes to the agony only in a veiled way, recording that when Jesus commanded Peter to put back his sword He inquired, "Shall I not drink the cup

which the Father has given Me?" Now, were all these characteristic touches and differences of narration submitted to an unprejudiced judge, he would deem them corroborative of the main facts, convergent upon one resultant figure of the Great Sufferer, who voluntarily bore His agony; who shrank from His destiny in momentary uncertainty, and yet exhibited a triumphant fortitude in the sacrifice.

2. When the Vaedictory Discourse was ended, they sang a hymn—"the Hallel";<sup>1</sup> and Jesus then led His eleven disciples away to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He was wont to seek retirement. As they went He recalled Zechariah's oracle concerning the rejection of the Shepherd Messiah, and pointed out that the blow struck at Him would cause them to stumble and temporarily disperse. Yet once again, with the warning, He anticipates a subsequent recovery, when He would rejoin them in Galilee. At the entrance of the grove Jesus told the little company to await there, and, taking His three most intimate disciples, went a little farther. Hitherto He had appeared serenely certain of ultimate victory, and had poured out words of solace and encouragement; but now He manifested signs of great mental distress, and said to His three companions, "My soul is very sorrowful unto death! Stay here and watch!" This swift alternation of mood is far from inexplicable. Many a man, foreseeing grave dangers, in the presence of wife and children will give utterance to expressions of hope, calmness and patient trust; and then, a few moments later, when withdrawn with a strong and faithful friend, he will begin to speak of apprehensions and perplexity. There are different planes of consciousness in the abysmal depths of personality, and a man often passes swiftly from one to another. It is often as though within each self, as within the intricate coils of some mysterious shell, there were many selves: some live out their little lives without ever reaching an intimate acquaintance with the innermost uniting principle of personality, while others come to that knowledge only through tragic developments of sorrow. If but the crust of habit be broken, what strange, tumultuous fires are disclosed! In the closing scenes of our Lord's Ministry recorded in the Gospels, we see reflected the swift transitions from the calm surface consciousness to the inward agony of His inner

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxv-cxviii.

life—from the habitual trust in His Heavenly Father to the torture of dreadful uncertainty.

3. Jesus requested His three disciples to watch; then, going about a stone's throw away, He fell upon His face and prayed: "Abba—Father,—all things are possible with Thee: remove this cup from Me: but not what I will, but what Thou [wilt]." All docetic theories of Christ break upon this history of His Passion. The agonized confession in St. Mark has parallels in the other Synoptic Gospels. St. Matthew says, "He began to be sorrowful and dismayed";<sup>1</sup> while St. Luke writes significantly that "He tore himself away from them," i.e. the disciples,<sup>2</sup> and in the restrained allusion to our Lord's repeated prayer and sweat of blood, there is suggested the experience of intensest suffering. How vivid the remembrance of this struggle was may be seen from the citing of it to prove the reality of Christ's humanity in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death . . . learned obedience by the things which He suffered."<sup>3</sup> The duration of this final struggle is only suggested by the statement that in His agony He prayed "more extendedly."<sup>4</sup> It is most surprising that, believing that Jesus was Son of God and Lord of men, these Evangelists never for a moment seem to wish any concealment of the painful and extended struggle through which He passed into reconciliation with so dark a dispensation of Divine Providence. As we recall the calm Stoic fortitude of other martyrs it will seem passing strange that Jesus, for whom the claim of transcendence is made, should experience a shrinking so akin to a break-down of nerves. Perhaps insight into this mystery of sorrow depends upon moral stature; but all must feel that here there is a margin for incertitude, and only ignorance dares to be dogmatic. An absence of sympathy, however, will ever cause men to misconstrue this retirement to the Garden: thus, for instance, the Jew of Celsus says, "How should we deem Him to be a God, who not only in other respects, as was currently reported, performed none of His promises, but who also, after we had convicted Him, and condemned Him as deserving of punishment, was found attempting to conceal Himself, and endeavouring to

<sup>1</sup> ἄδημονεῖν.

<sup>2</sup> ἀσπάσθη ἀπ' αὐτῶν.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. v. 7-9.

<sup>4</sup> ἐκτενέστερον.

escape in a most disgraceful manner, and who was betrayed by those whom He called disciples."<sup>1</sup> But Jesus sought no concealment, nor made attempts to escape the treachery He had foreseen. The Passion in the Garden cannot be misread as the struggle of unsuccessful flight.

4. Of what nature was the agony Jesus suffered on the eve of His Crucifixion? Some have queried whether it was the fear of physical death, since the very fineness of His bodily organization may have made the anticipation of a violent death a revolting thing. But we think there was some profounder mental and moral cause for His distress. The Gospels reveal a temporary disturbance in His vision of His Father's Will. He who had until now maintained an attitude of calm certitude becomes, for a brief while, the subject of a dread uncertainty. We are indeed but ill-prepared to understand the passing incertitude of One who had on all other occasions possessed a perfect realization of Divine Sonship, for we are the victims of doubt and of an obscured and intermittent consciousness of our filial relation to God. But Jesus, even in Gethsemane, never doubted His Father's love: He was amazed at being enveloped in a cloud of mental uncertainty; and so agonizing was this travail of His Spirit, that He was constrained to supplicate the sympathy of His chosen companions. It is well to observe, however, that the three disciples were asked to watch with Him, not for Him—not to warn Him if enemies came, but to communicate warmth of kindly feeling and encouragement in His lonely trial. The Heart of Jesus was tremulous with yearning for human fellowship; His love for men was thirsting for response. Such craving for sympathy was human; but our difficulty is that such uncertainty of His Father's Will does not seem Divine. Even here, however, there must be caution and discrimination; it must not be thought that Jesus doubted His Father's goodness; neither must we suppose that He desired to alter His Father's plan; His trial arose from the uncertainty whether His dark depression was demanded by the Father's Will. He did not waver in His trust in His Heavenly Father; but He was driven, by His mental distress, to pray for deliverance from all unnecessary suffering. This fact makes it plain how clear and intense was the sorrow He was bearing.

<sup>1</sup> *Origen against Celsus*, bk. ii., ch. ix.



5. The agony of Jesus, however, involved other emotions besides uncertainty; and we shall not err if we ascribe it in part to vicarious penitence. The sinlessness which we might suppose would have saved Him from this trial became His supreme qualification for suffering and His compulsion to offer Himself as a sacrifice to the Father. As Son of Man He shared the emotions, sufferings and even sins of humanity. Although individually pure, He had so completely identified Himself with the race that all its experiences of sin, shame and separation from God passed into His consciousness. Sharing so passionately our common nature, He felt at His heart's centre all the thrills, vibrations and shocks of human experience. The ties of blood and affinities of nature are too subtle for our coarse analysis; we feel them and can never escape them, but they are too mystically elusive for intellectual definition. While our differences and separations lie on the surface, we are all really bound into one community, and as a race we form one organic whole. As true humanity is developed in us the consciousness of this oneness becomes ever more accentuated. A merely clever man will glory in his individuality and distinction, but the great soul feels its oneness with all men, and is ever conscious of the ebb and flow of those tides that form part of the great ocean of universal life. The true note of personality is not isolation, but inclusion and comprehension. The recollection of this truth of solidarity, which is felt in the measure of the development and perfection of consciousness, helps us to understand something of what was passing in the Soul of Jesus; He was so one with men that the reflex of all their sin and suffering formed an integral part of His experience; and this was not merely of the nature of a sympathetic echo: it was part of a process of self-identification. As at His baptism He reckoned Himself one with His sinful brethren, and joined in their confession and repentance: so, in Gethsemane, He felt the quivering ache and agonized conscience of the world's sin. As He struggled there the limits of individuality dissolved; He felt Himself to be the Soul of the race; He was our humanity, and on His heart He bore the burden of man's separation from God. This doubt, this shame, this separation, He struggled to overcome; and His conquest was won by absolute surrender to the Father's will, so that He offered to God the sacrifice of a human nature reconciled to God's holy purpose. The possibilities of such a



solidarity of conscious life can be but imperfectly realized by us; and, for any measure of understanding concerning Christ's self-identification with us, imagination must be allowed to carry us beyond our personal experiences. We must conjure up the conception of perfect sympathy;—that is, of a soul without one touch of selfishness in it—a sinless being. But, it may be asked, how can a sinless being understand sin? Yet the moral paradox of the world lies just here; the purer we become the intenser grows our penitence. It is not the reprobate who feels his sin most, but the reprobate's saintly mother. Since, therefore, sin hardens the heart and blinds the conscience, the intensest suffering for sin will be felt by One who knew no sin. Thus, in the agony of the Garden Jesus realized all the unalleviated horror of man's guilt; He perceived the essence of sin to be rebellion against God—a potent cause of evil, disease, misery and death. This was the horror of great darkness which fell upon His soul; and we cannot wonder if, as He drank the bitter cup of woe, He cried out to His Father for relief from aught of sorrow which was unnecessary.

6. Proceeding reverently and cautiously to make a tentative examination of our Lord's Passion, we soon become aware of the peril which awaits all analysis of the soul. The subjects of hysteria may suffer a mysterious disintegration of personality, but we instinctively feel that the experience of Jesus was charged with the integrity of His perfect Person. The apostolic writers instinctively felt this, and treated all the scenes of His Passion as one whole; the Garden agony could not be severed from His acceptance of crucifixion, and these were joined to His resurrection; and this suffering and active ministry was, in their eyes, a sacrifice for the sin of the world. The New Testament terminology was derived from Jewish ritual; but even the analogies of sacrificial ceremonies seem hardly adequate to fathom the depths of Christ's Passion. And yet the terminology of sacrifice has entered deeply into human speech, and has so much inherent reality that no other language seems to touch the central ministry of the suffering of Jesus. We shall not err, however, if we seize upon the idea of love as lying behind the sacrificial obedience of the Lord. A part, at least, of His agony in the Garden was due to the rejection of His love. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him

not." And even now, in spite of centuries of reflection and adoring wonder, neither the world nor the Church has adequately owned the stupendous marvel of love's sacrifice. We may learn to appreciate the greater from the less; the glowing, enthusiastic fervour of Francis Xavier aids the imagination in conceiving the tender and passionate yearnings that must have filled the heart of Jesus. This missionary, who himself would have confessed that he followed his Lord's example at a distance, said: "But this I dare say, that whatever form of torture or of death awaits me, I am ready to suffer it ten thousand times for the salvation of a single soul."<sup>1</sup> We may use this confession as a stepping-stone to the understanding of the Master's more perfect love—its intense power of individualizing every soul and its magnitude in comprehending all. The aroma of His love fills the New Testament; His philanthropy had no taint of defect, and to it was conjoined a reason that had no fault. Probably there is, in all the world, no sorrow like that of outraged love. During His earthly ministry Jesus had succeeded in permanently attaching to Himself a little band of disciples who inadequately responded to His love and failed to apprehend His aims; but, on the other hand, the nation which had been chosen and disciplined by Divine Providence, through its chief representatives and authorized officials deliberately rejected Jesus with callous indifference and hostile disdain of His Messianic claim. It could not but be, then, that the exquisite agony of this rejection should seem a bitter cup to drink, and that the hour should seem too oppressive to be borne.

7. Love implies also a great capacity for suffering; probably no one ever lived who was more susceptible than Jesus to the woes of others. In His Spirit Jesus was conscious of all the undertones of the world's sorrow; in His experience the agonies of a sinful world were summed up, and temporarily it dismayed even Him. No film of selfishness dimmed His vision; no callosity of emotion deadened the smart of pain in His heart. Were we to apprehend all the anguish of the poor, all the agony of those who slowly starve, all the torments endured by wronged women, all the hurt of body and mind endured by innocent children, all the fury of remorse inflicted upon the souls of men who awake too late to a consciousness of their guilt,

<sup>1</sup> Francis Xavier.

and could there pass before our minds all the sin and misery crowded into the world's experience at any hour, such acute and all-embracing perception would assuredly disturb the balance of judgement and rob us of our sanity. Now it really seems as if Jesus apprehended, with intellectual grasp and emotional sensibility, all the meaning of the world's severance from God. There was no cloud upon His conscience, no impenetrable scale covering His heart; hence, in the hour of His desolation, He was shaken and dismayed. But when the first paroxysm of grief had broken, and He had steadied His soul with prayer, Jesus of His own free-will took up the burden of the world's sin and shame, and offered His own perfect obedience to the Heavenly Father as a sacrifice for the reconciliation of humanity. As we have seen, by His oneness with every man; by His self-identification with the race in mighty sympathy, and by a mystic community in the realm of personal spirits, Jesus felt as though all souls, all wills, all consciences, were concentrated in His own Spirit, so that He suffered and acted for all. And the task which was thus laid upon Him was to draw the humanity He represented into moral harmony with the Divine Will of unchanging Righteousness. Such a sacrifice as this was not merely a negative act of renunciation; it was a great positive projection of His personal force against evil. The hour in which this sacrifice culminated was dark, and the cup which held this draught of sorrow was bitter; but He drained it to the dregs, saying: "Father, Thy will be done."

8. When the first tumultuous uprising of His sorrow had subsided, Jesus came back to the three disciples, and finding them heavy with sleep, He said to Simon: "Sleepest thou? Hadst thou not strength to watch one hour? Watch and pray, that ye may not come into temptation. The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." This exquisite blending of reproach and apology breathes the fine sensibility and magnanimity of our Lord, and carries in its tone the testimony of its historicity. One wonders that those men could sleep in that hour, and suspects that they did not even realize the imminence of death. Puzzling though it is to us, the very incoherence between Christ's reiterated warnings of the coming doom, and the unexpectant mood of those who heard, can belong only to the realm of historic fact. Fancy would either have omitted the frequent

forecasts of the Cross, or it would surely have invented some correspondence in the attitude of the disciples. Their dulness of comprehension, though at times it has seemed incredible, can be explained by the obsession of their minds by the material Messianism of their age. Ideas of condemnation and death, however often repeated, were too utterly discordant with popular hopes and beliefs to gain any intelligible place in their thought; therefore, these disciples moved forward to the end, hoping against hope that their Lord would soon restore the Kingdom to Israel. A second and a third time Jesus returned to His disciples, and seemed surprised at their persistent drowsiness, exclaiming, "Ye still sleep and rest!" Then came an interruption which can be understood only on the supposition that Jesus had received some intimation of Judas's agreement with the chief priests to betray Him for so much silver. It is possible that Jesus had learned of this thing by some kind of prophetic intuition; and yet He could scarce credit such baseness in the man He had called His friend. But at the instant when He was commenting upon the continued sleep, He caught the murmur of voices and tramp of many feet; then looking up, He saw the flash of torches through the trees; at once His premonition about Judas and the bribe was confirmed, and in amazed and indignant sorrow He made the ejaculation, "he did receive it!"<sup>1</sup> Turning at once to the disciples, Jesus said: "The hour has come! Behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise: let us go. Behold, My betrayer is near!"

"Into the woods my Master went  
 Clean forspent, forspent;  
 Into the woods my Master came  
 Forspent with love and shame.  
 But the olives they were not blind to Him;  
 The little grey leaves were kind to Him;  
 The thorn-tree had a mind to Him  
 When into the woods He came.

"Out of the woods my Master went,  
 And He was well-content;

<sup>1</sup>In *The Expositor*, Dec. 1905, J. De Zwaan examines the uses of the word ἀπέχει and concludes—(a) it is never used impersonally: (β) it has nowhere the meaning: *sufficit*, it is enough: (γ) ἀπέχειν nearly always means to *have received*, usually in a commercial sense; (δ) ἀπέχει has no other sense than that which is proper to the third pers. sing. of the pres. ind. of the aforesaid verb. The use of this word here is another instance of St. Mark's peculiar originality and keen historical sense."



Out of the woods my Master came,  
 Content with death and shame.  
 When death and shame would woo Him last;  
 From under the trees they drew Him last,  
 'Twas on a tree they slew Him last,  
 When out of the woods He came."<sup>1</sup>

9. The details of the arrest of Jesus are somewhat confused, and in consequence only the main facts of this hurried tragedy can be known with certainty. With a shepherd's true instinct, Jesus stepped ahead of His little band and advanced to meet His enemies, while Judas, guiding a mingled throng, stepped forth and saluted our Lord with a kiss. The sacrament of love was made a token for treachery. The reply of Jesus is differently reported. One evangelist makes Him exclaim, "Comrade, for what work you are come!"<sup>2</sup> While St. Luke records the words, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" This third evangelist also states that the chief priests, elders and commanders (police) of the temple were there; and St. John gives us to understand that a cohort of Roman soldiers accompanied them. So manifest, however, was the moral supremacy of Jesus at this crisis, that those who had pressed forward to arrest Him now fell back in confusion. When some of them recovered from their momentary panic and laid hands on Jesus, Simon drew forth a sword and smote Malchus, the servant of the high-priest: the ill-aimed blow only cut off the man's ear. St. Matthew accords with St. John in representing Jesus as full of self-possession and ready to make a voluntary surrender. "Put back thy sword into its place," He said. "For all those who take the sword shall perish with the sword. Or, thinkest thou that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will provide Me now with more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must come to pass?" St. Luke alone makes the characteristic addition that Jesus immediately healed the man's wounded ear; and if this were so it would explain how it was that no mention of Simon's act of violence was charged against Him at His trial. It should be noted, however, that Dr. E. A. Abbot regards this Lucan detail as an instance of substitution through misunderstanding of the rebuke to Peter and the command to restore the sword to its place; he surmises that St. Luke wrongly applied some ambiguous word in

<sup>1</sup> Sidney Lanier.

<sup>2</sup> Fritzsche takes  $\delta$  =  $\delta\iota\omicron\nu$ . (*Exp. Gk. Test*, Matt. xxvi. 49.)



the original tradition to the ear instead of applying it to the sword.<sup>1</sup> Then all the hopes and courage of the disciples oozed away, and they all forsook Him and fled. In St. Mark's gospel is found one other little incident in this arrest which may indeed be "the monogram of the painter in the dark corner of the picture." Some young man had been disturbed by a warning that Jesus was in danger; rising hurriedly from his couch he had thrown a linen cloth around his person and gone out. If he proposed communicating with Jesus he was too late and reached the Garden only in time to see the arrest completed. Seeing the youth some of the mob tried to lay hold upon him, but he, slipping off his only covering, escaped into the darkness. One wonders whether we may identify this unnamed youth with Mark the evangelist,—at whose house in the city, it may be, Jesus had supped a few hours previously,—if so we are brought into closest possible contact with actual scenes and their first-hand witnesses. If this identification must be left undecided, still there is no doubt that the course of events described in this chapter can be regarded as historically reliable. After His Agony Jesus voluntarily accepted all the consequences of His mental surrender to the Father's holy will: He drank the cup and endured the hour.

<sup>1</sup> *Class. Rev.*, December, 1893, p. 443. Plummer's *Luke*, p. 545.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WAY OF THE CROSS

I. THE poet-philosopher of ancient Greece said, "Philosophy begins in wonder. He was not a bad genealogist who said that Iris is the child of Thaumas."<sup>1</sup> Truth, the messenger of the gods, "that passes to and fro between heaven and earth and brings them into communion," is the child of Wonder. We have given no meagre part to the play of wholesome criticism in the foregoing study of the Ministry of Jesus; but, as we have entered into the mysterious sanctuary of sorrow, a sense of awe, of reverence, has surged up in our minds; and, while prepared to acknowledge all the difficulties of the text, we are forced to contemplate the Cross with a great wonder. Nothing stirs so much in us as the Cross does—"the burden of the mystery

"Of all this unintelligible world."

One of the new "Oxyrhynchus" sayings run thus: "Jesus saith, Let not him who seeks the Father cease until he find Him; and having found Him, let him be amazed; and being amazed he shall reign, and reigning shall rest."<sup>2</sup> Akin to this is the *logion* preserved by Clement of Alexandria, also omitted from the Gospels, "He that wonders shall reign."<sup>3</sup> This must, therefore, be the dominant mood or key-thought, as we seek to gain a true impression of the last grand event of our Lord's earthly ministry. We dare not let the exacting spirit of criticism slay the soul's wonder, which is the Mother of true thought.

2. To His enemies, who had come out in such force, Jesus said: "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Unrestrained by aught of gentleness or of gratitude, men bound Him as though He were a dangerous prisoner, little recking that they would have had no power over Him had not His Heavenly Father given Him into their hands. St. John states that Jesus was led away first to the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high-

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Theæt.*, 155, Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> *Stromateis*, v. 4. § 97.

<sup>3</sup> Oxyrhynchus Logia.

priest, whose name was Annas. This man had been the high-priest from A.D. 7 till A.D. 14, and was followed by five sons, who wore the mitre in succession. It may have been that this able yet unscrupulous man was living under his son-in-law's roof; and, if this were so, some of the obscurities of the Gospels would vanish. Annas took the occasion to ask the prisoner some preliminary questions before he led the way to Caiaphas, who was to preside over the subsequent inquiry. As though he would fain gauge the actual strength of the movement Jesus had begun, the high-priest then asked his prisoner about His teaching and His disciples, marvelling the while that this Galilean prophet had impressed Himself so deeply upon the popular imagination. Jesus appealed to the memories of those who had heard His public teaching, and refused to be inveigled into futile controversies; He might have had Socrates' defence in His mind: "If anyone says that he has learned or heard anything from me in private which all the world has not heard, let me tell you that he is lying."<sup>1</sup> Irritated by His dauntless bearing one of the sycophantic crew smote Jesus, and exclaimed, "Answerest Thou the high-priest so?" Exquisitely sensitive to every touch of inhumanity, whether shown toward others or toward Himself, Jesus remonstrated, "If I have spoken wrongly, give evidence of wrong; but if rightly, why beat me?"

3. The priests, elders and scribes of the Sanhedrim were summoned at once, that Jesus might be subjected to a form of trial; although really, the majority of them had prejudged the case, and were now desirous only of getting such evidence as would justify a sentence of death. His enemies, however, found but little wherewith they might accuse Him. It might have been expected that His frequent violations of the Sabbath, which had brought about the first breach between the hierarchy and Jesus, would have been charged against Him; that no such accusation appears in the record can be explained by the supposition that those who directed the trial feared lest any recollection of His Sabbath miracles should evoke too much sympathy. How pure, then, must have been that life, since the most damaging testimony against Him was that He had spoken ambiguous words against the temple: "I will break down this sanctuary made with hands, and after three days I will build another not made with

<sup>1</sup>*Apology*, 33.

hands.”<sup>1</sup> Edged with malevolence though it was, such evidence lacked cogency, and proved unequal to the sentence demanded.<sup>2</sup> Baffled by this surprising lack of testimony, the high-priest forgot the reserve due to the dignity of his office, and, advancing into the semicircle of counsellors, tried to entangle Jesus into some self-committing statement about His Messiahship. The unconcealed animus of His judges made Jesus indignantly silent. Vexed at this muteness, and fearing that the prisoner might be exonerated, Caiaphas, who looked upon Jesus as an enemy of the state, enjoined Him upon oath to answer if He were the Messiah. The whole Ministry of Jesus had made this question inevitable, and although it had been suppressed until now, it underlay the thought of every one of those judges. Silence now might be taken as a renunciation of His claim, and even though He was aware that His listeners would interpret the title of Messiah very differently from Himself, He could not allow them to imagine that He renounced it; therefore, He answered, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming in the clouds of the sky.” In these apocalyptic terms, Jesus in the hour of His trial breathed the assurance of His ultimate triumph, and showed that He was looking beyond death to some glorious *parousia*, such as the ancient prophets had foretold. There are critics who will treat these words as the evidence of illusions cherished by the Man of Nazareth; while some there are, on the other hand, who believe that the balanced and lucid mind of Jesus was fed by a spirit of prophecy. Caiaphas, although it was the very utterance he had wished for, treated such self-attesting words as direst blasphemy or madness, and with simulated or real horror, rent his priestly vestments, exclaiming, “What further witnesses do we need?” “And they all condemned Him to the doom of death.” Then they began to heap contumely upon Him, as though He were some wretched pretender; “even the officers received Him with slaps of the open hand.” That even menials should have been permitted to treat Jesus with such brutal indignities, shows that the hierarchy desired to strip Him of every vestige of honour by the rude instrument of public ridicule. The Sanhedrim condemned Jesus as deserving of death, because He claimed to be the Messiah; ignoring that this title on His lips was Spiritual rather than Temporal, Human and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. omits τὸν χειροποιήτρον and ἄλλον ἀχειροποιήτρον, xxvi. 61.

<sup>2</sup> καὶ Ἰσραὶ αἱ μαρτυρίαι οὐκ ἦσαν, Mark xiv. 56.

not merely National, and that it was a claim to the over-lordship of all the world.

4. While our Lord was being subjected to this ordeal, His disciple, Simon, was also undergoing the testing that the Master had forewarned. St. John's account of this incident might lead us to imagine that the denial took place during the examination of Jesus by Annas, while the Synoptists place it in the palace of Caiaphas. This discrepancy would be explained by adopting the suggestion we have made that Annas may have been staying with his son-in-law. Concerning the fact of Simon's denial, there is no uncertainty; for it is not the kind of thing that the Primitive Church would invent. Whether Simon denied his Lord once or thrice; whether the same serving-maid repeated her accusing inquiry, or two distinct persons detected the marks of his Galilean accent; whether the cock crew once or twice,—the fact remains sure that this impetuous fisherman, who a few hours earlier had avowed His readiness to die for His Master, now under the stress of fear even denied acquaintance with Him. But then, how came Simon within the precincts of the high-priest's house? St. Mark plainly asserts that at the arrest the disciples "forsook Him (Jesus) and fled"; but the fourth evangelist states that Simon "was following Jesus" with another disciple, and this unnamed companion was "known unto the high-priest." Professor Burkitt makes a curious suggestion that this second disciple may be identified with the author of the Fourth Gospel, but not with Zebedee's son; that he was the John "who had been a priest and worn the high-priest's mitre," but had been converted from Sadduceism to follow Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Whatever acceptance this novel theory may find, we must go the length of recognizing that the unnamed disciple was a person of sufficient influence to obtain entrance for himself and Simon into the palace of the high-priest. There was considerable daring in venturing among these enemies of Jesus after his assault upon Malchus—more, in fact, than Simon could maintain. The night was cold, and as he stood by the fire a serving-maid accosted him as a disciple of Jesus. A sudden terror smote on Simon's heart, and instantly words of denial escaped him. St. John adds that another, a kinsman of Malchus, came a little later and repeated the interrogation. St. Luke suppresses all mention of Simon's

<sup>1</sup> *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 248.



oaths; but it is too plain that the denial became more vehement when repeated. Then a cock crew, or the hour of the cock-crow was signalled, and at that moment Jesus turned as He stood in the higher part of the court and looked at Simon. Instantly the disloyal disciple repented of his sin, and going out wept bitterly. Such a sudden, undesigned fall as this cannot be compared with the treachery of Judas; at the same time it deepened the wounds of Jesus, made by the friends of His own household. The cruelest blow is love's denial by someone beloved.

5. The Sanhedrim, it is said,<sup>1</sup> was deprived of the prerogative of deciding cases of great importance; but this in nowise contradicts the representation of the Gospels that the counsellors made a preliminary investigation to prepare to lay the matter before the Roman procurator. Irregular and legally ineffectual as this midnight trial was, it served to give the Sanhedrists their cue in appealing to Pilate. How long the interval proved before the prætorium (i.e. the governor's tent) was open, we do not know; nor are we sure whether it was in Herod's palace or in the fortress of Antonia. Obscure as are the allusions to time, we ought not to pass unnoticed the statement that the chief priests refrained from going into the prætorium, lest they should be ceremonially defiled and debarred from eating the Paschal Lamb. It confirms our belief that the Supper of the previous evening was an anticipatory *Pascha*. The Sanhedrists had hoped that Pilate might content himself with confirming the death sentence upon Jesus on the strength of their examination of Him; but the feeling for justice, so natural to a Roman judge, may have been reinforced in this case by latent resentment at the arrogance of those Jewish priests. Despite all the ridicule that has been poured upon the notion that Pilate played the part of a peripatetic judge, we find nothing improbable in the procurator's decision to examine Jesus in private. St. Luke specifies three

<sup>1</sup> Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*: Dict. of the Bible, iv., p. 401.

Edersheim, vol. i., p. 128, "The Sanhedrin did exist during his (Herod's) reign, though it must have been shorn of all real power, and its activity confined to ecclesiastical, or semi-ecclesiastical, causes." P. 238, "After the accession of Herod the Sanhedrin became a shadow of itself." Vol. ii., p. 556, "The Sanhedrin would be accorded full jurisdiction in inferior and in religious matters, with the greatest show, but with the least amount of real rule, or of superior authority."

definite accusations made before Pilate against Jesus; He was charged with seditious agitation, with forbidding tribute to Cæsar, and with claiming to be King of the Jews. The self-evident discrepancy between the serious accusations of treason and the modesty of the prisoner's bearing prompted Pilate to ask ironically, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" It must have occasioned some astonishment in the governor's mind when, instead of giving a direct reply, Jesus inquired if he asked with any personal interest in His doctrine, or whether he only repeated what others had told him. Even at that trying moment there appears a sublime enthusiasm in Jesus, so that the appearance of honesty in His Roman judge at once detached His attention from His own desperate case to His dominant ambition to advance the Kingdom of Truth. Pilate scornfully answered that he was no Jew, but that he desired to know of what matter Jesus had been guilty. Then, lifted above all thought of self-preservation, the prisoner affirmed His Kingship and explained it: "My reign is not of this world; were My reign of this world, My officers would have fought to prevent Me from being delivered to the Jews; but My realm is not from hence."<sup>1</sup> Pilate was amazed at the prisoner's claim and said, "So Thou art a king!" "Certainly," said Jesus, "I am a king. For this end have I been born, and for this end have I come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Whatever be the ultimate judgement upon these words, it can hardly be gainsaid that the chief offence of Jesus which brought Him to His end was the unretracted claim to be the Messianic King. The words, whether spoken by Jesus, or whether they simply grew out of the consciousness of the Primitive Church, fit in with the calm dignity and courage of the Master. Never before or since have egoism so immense and lowliness so true blended thus strangely. Thinking that He was some deluded dreamer or enthusiastic Stoic, Pilate asked sceptically and impatiently, "Truth! What is truth?" Without waiting for an answer, he went forth to the accusers with the memorable verdict: "I find nothing criminal in this man!" The priests angrily retorted that Jesus had stirred up the people throughout the land from Galilee unto Jerusalem. This suggested to Pilate a way out of the embroglio; he would send the Prisoner to Herod to be tried. Although the trial

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Dods, *ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*, as though He "has other worlds in view."

before Herod has been much doubted, still, as Schleiermacher<sup>1</sup> has said, "the transaction is too circumstantially detailed to admit a doubt; and our reporter seems to have an acquaintance in the house of Herod who supplied Him with this fact, as John seems to have had in the house of Annas." This informant may have been Joanna, the wife of Chuza. The tetrarch, it appears, had lost his earlier fear that Jesus was John returned to life, and was flattered by Pilate's courtesy, while he thought that perhaps the Prisoner might perform some miracle before him. Jesus knew the character of Herod, and refused to say anything. Such taciturnity seemed to Herod a proof that Jesus had no exceptional power, but was merely some poor ignorant fanatic, who had deceived Himself and the people; therefore he ordered that He should be arrayed in bright raiment like some stage-king, and taken back to Pilate with an ingratiating compliment.

6. Paradoxical as it may seem, Jesus was really the Judge of all who were at that trial; His character was a moral touchstone; in His white light the malignity and murderous fury of the priests and Pharisees could not be hidden; and while the pusillanimity of Pilate could not withstand their resoluteness, the very proximity of Jesus awakened something like conscience and solicitude in the Roman Judge. Someone reminded him of the Paschal custom of setting a prisoner at liberty; and Pilate, reiterating that Jesus had done naught to deserve death, proposed to chastise Him and let Him go. The Jews, however, preferred that a murderer should be emancipated, and shouted of Jesus, "Away with Him! Release Bar-Abbas for us!" And, to Pilate's remonstrance, gave back the deafening shout, "Crucify! Crucify Him!" "We have a law," they said, "and by the law He ought to die, because He made Himself out to be God's Son." There was not only a vein of superstition in Pilate, but also more than a touch of cowardice; and, seeing this, Jesus remained silent when he came again to renew his inquiries. When Pilate vaunted his power either to release Him or to condemn, Jesus simply reminded him that this was a trust from above, and added, as though He would exculpate His judge, that Caiaphas, who was the leader of the Sanhedrim and had delivered Him to the Roman tribunal, was guilty of the greater sin. Interpreting the words of Jesus in this way, it appears that He pitied Pilate and

<sup>1</sup> *St. Luke* (Eng. trans.), p. 304.

credited the high-priest with the crime of using even the power of Rome as an instrument of religious apostasy. Pilate's perplexity was increased by a superstitious message from his wife: "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered to-day many things through Him in a dream." But the judge's vacillations ended in surrender; for those obstinate Jews threatened him with the taunt that, if he released Jesus he would not be Cæsar's friend; and Pilate felt afraid to incur the displeasure of his gloomy, tyrannical master. Having weakly yielded against his better judgement, St. Matthew says that He disclaimed all responsibility by symbolically washing his hands and exclaiming, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man: see you to it."

7. The next step in that sorrowful drama was the handing over of Jesus to the Roman soldiers; and those rough men are represented as indulging in brutal merriment over this Jewish King, throwing over Him the robes of mock royalty—the same garment, perhaps, in which Herod had sent Him back to Pilate.<sup>1</sup> Then, having scourged their Prisoner, they crowned Him with plaited thorns and gave Him a reed for a sceptre; they also spat upon Him and kept smiting Him on the head. As He was brought forth again, St. John represents Pilate as making a final appeal in words which mean so much more than the speaker intended, "Behold the Man!" To the Roman judge it seemed the acme of absurdity to cherish fears of such a helpless victim; surely, such an one could do naught to injure the state. The flagellation may have taken place before the second examination by Pilate, as St. John states; but the order of events is confused in the Gospels. The governor's hope to get Jesus off was given up; from the judgement-seat at the place of the tessellated pavement, he finally pronounced the sentence of Crucifixion. The fourth evangelist looked upon this victory of Christ's foes as the surrender of all national hopes,—the final abandonment of the very vestiges of political liberty. And we, who belong not to the Israel after the flesh, see in this defeat of justice,—the doom of the Son of Man,—the culminating instance of an oft-repeated tragedy of the overthrow of the cause of humanity by injustice, envy, greed and armed selfishness. And yet they could not have bound Him with cords, had He Himself not first bound His heart and hands with love. Through all we discern the autonomy of a

<sup>1</sup> Mark, *πορφύραν*, purple garment; Matt., *χλαμύδα κοκκίνην*, scarlet robe.



true Priest, as well as the fitness of the victim of sacrifice:  
*Passus quia Ipse voluit.*

8. The gospel of St. John states that Jesus was led out to Golgotha bearing His own Cross; but the earlier Gospels inform us that Jesus was exhausted and fell under the weight of the heavy beam, and that the Cyrenian Simon<sup>1</sup> was impressed into the service of carrying the burden for Jesus. St. Luke adds, further, that in the procession were also two criminals who were being led out for execution. The several evangelists record, with verbal variations, how that on the tablet or beam was inscribed the title which summed up the accusation against Jesus, "The King of the Jews." Angry at what they took to be a satire upon their nation, the Jewish leaders asked the governor to modify it by the statement that this was what Jesus called Himself; but Pilate repulsed them with the laconic utterance, "What I have written, I have written." It may be added that in this matter we trace the Roman custom of covering the tablet with gypsum and inscribing upon it the crime with which the bearer was charged. As Jesus passed along in sorrowful silence, He must have contrasted the procession of the Palm Sunday when, instead of harsh cries for His Crucifixion, the air was rent with glad hosannas. Yet St. Luke has preserved for us a tradition that confirms the fourth evangelist's impression of Christ's regal self-possession and autonomy, even at this stage of His physical humiliation, showing us that, although worn out with the long strain of agony, Jesus was still thinking of others rather than of Himself. This Lucan detail also relieves the common people of a perfidious apostasy; for along the road Jesus, seeing "a large multitude of the people and of women" beating their breasts and lamenting for Him, He turned and said, with prophetic tenderness:

"Daughters of Jerusalem! weep not for Me,  
 But weep for yourselves and for your children:  
 For behold! days are coming when it shall be said,  
 Happy the barren—the wombs that have not borne, the breasts that have  
 not given suck!

<sup>1</sup> The father of Alexander and Rufus (cf. Rom. xvi. 13 and Acts xix. 33). Some of the Gnostics reported that Simon was crucified instead of Jesus. The Moslems also believe that Jesus was caught away, and that some other was slain in His stead.



Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,'  
 And to the mounds, 'cover us';  
 For if they do this in the green tree,  
 What shall be done in the dry?"

9. Were the Crucifixion of Jesus an ordinary history of a criminal execution, we should shrink from dwelling upon the physical horrors; but the subsequent events issuing from it have shown it to be the most arrestive tragedy in the annals of our race; and however it may be interpreted, the fire of the Passion behind it purges us of ignoble egotisms. The discrepancy between the earliest and latest gospels<sup>1</sup> in relation to the hour of the Crucifixion need not vex us if we remember oriental looseness in all speech about time. Another uncertainty is whether the wine drugged with myrrh was offered indiscriminately to the victims to stupefy them, or whether St. Matthew's account is truer, that the gall was offered in cruel sportiveness. The Cross was probably little higher than the stature of a man; but we do not know if the soldiers nailed Christ's feet to it as well as His hands. Besides telling us of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus, St. Luke records a very remarkable dialogue among those sufferers. One of them began to mock Jesus with spiteful jibes; he was checked, however, by his companion, who petitioned Jesus as his Lord to remember him when He should come in His Kingdom. Surely there could not be a greater miracle of faith than that this dying criminal should look upon Jesus in His shameful death-agony as a King whom death could not destroy, and address to Him such a prayer. Amazing, too, was the calm certitude of the Crucified Lord, as He answered, "This day shalt thou be in paradise with Me." Meanwhile the Jewish officials hurled their satire at Him that He saved others, but could not save Himself. That taunt is now Christ's highest eulogy; for, as one has said,<sup>2</sup> "Jesus fastened Himself to the Cross with three nails"—"the one of the love of man," "the other of obedience to the Eternal Father," and the third, "the zeal of His Glory and of our Good"—which "three nails" held Him to the Cross more surely than any iron bonds. In spite of Nature's occasional indifference to the fate of man, there often seems to be some occult sympathy between them. In this instance, although it was about the hour of noon, so strange a darkness fell upon the land that the

<sup>1</sup> Mark xv. 33; John xix. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Louis De Ponte, *Meditations*, iv., p. 397.

Roman centurion in charge of the execution made the superstitious ejaculation about that central victim whose demeanour throughout had impressed him as that of one both Great and Good, "Truly this was a son of God!" Quoting a traveller's experiences, the late Dr. Bruce suggested that it might have been one of those hot-wind storms which rage from the southeast, when "the heavens are overcast with a deep grey, and the sun loses his brightness and disappears. Over the darkened land rages the storm, so that the country in the morning is like a flower-carpet, in the evening appears a waste. . . . On the saddest day in human history swept such a storm at noon over Jerusalem, adding to the terrors of the Crucifixion!"<sup>1</sup>

10. The dying words of those we love are treasured long in living memories and tend to get repeated. Outside the Gospels are no records of the "seven words" from the Cross; it is not impossible that Jesus spoke articulately but thrice, and that His words may have been transmitted with oral variations; but neither is it wholly incredible that Jesus actually spoke these seven words which preserve the spirit and aroma of His Sacrifice. The fourth evangelist relates the fulfilment of Simeon's prediction that Mary's heart should be pierced through as with a sword. As she stood by the Cross with John, Jesus said, "Woman, behold thy Son! Behold thy Mother!" St. Luke preserves the beautiful prayer, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they are doing."<sup>2</sup> Next followed that agonizing cry of defeat—"that mysterious, that two-sided, that incompatible cry—so spiritually desolate, yet so tranquil in Spirit—"My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"<sup>3</sup> Of this we can only say, that, if the words of the twenty-second Psalm were really on His dying lips, we are sure also that the psalmist's certainty of deliverance was in His heart. St. John records the cry of thirst. Some there were who made a jest of the Aramaic "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani," saying: "Hold, let us see if Elias comes!" Ended at last was His curriculum of sorrow; His obedience was perfected, the sacrifice was consummated, and Jesus cried, "It is finished!" The first two evangelists note that He expired with a

<sup>1</sup> Furrer, *Wanderungen*, p. 175, quoted by Bruce in *Expos. Gk. T.*, Mark, in *loco*.

<sup>2</sup> Omitted fr. some valuable MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Moberly, *The Atonement and Personality*, p. 131.

loud cry; St. John states that "He bent His head and gave up the Spirit," while St. Luke says that He commended Himself to the Heavenly Father with a great voice: "Father, into Thy hands I entrust My Spirit." The Passion was at an end at last; for with unseemly haste the enemies of Jesus had hurried events from the hour of the arrest, and the swift movement of the whole tragedy seems to have paralyzed the friends of the Master. In death, however, He found new friends. Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and requested him to give the mangled body to himself for burial. Seeing that the Crucifixion had lasted a comparatively short time, one of the soldiers made certain that Jesus had not simply swooned by piercing His side with a spear; and, says the Evangelist, recording the tradition of an eye-witness, "immediately there came out blood and water." It would thus seem that the sufferings of Jesus had been terminated by the literal breaking of His heart. Joseph had purchased linen for the body, and Nicodemus brought myrrh and aloes, and together these two counsellors laid the body in a new sepulchre, "where as yet no man had ever been laid." They were followed by the women who, "after noting the tomb and how His body was laid, returned and got ready spices and ointments."

II. A few brief allusions only are necessary to recall some of the incidents concurrent with and dependent upon the Crucifixion of Jesus. Discrepant accounts are given of the fate of Judas in St. Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles. The Jewish evangelist takes the Marcan tradition that the chief priests "promised to give him (Judas) money" and expands it by an inexact quotation of ancient prophecy. He also states that when Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he was stricken with remorse, and, returning the silver to the priests, went and hanged himself; that then the priests took up the rejected money and purchased with it the "Potter's Field," which henceforth came to be known as the Field of Blood, and was used as a cemetery for strangers. On the other hand, St. Luke says nothing of the traitor's remorse, but represents him as buying a field with the blood-money, and afterwards meeting his death by a fall. The name Akeldama may be simply the Aramaic equivalent for "cemetery." Out of these discrepancies emerge the generally accepted belief that, after the betrayal of Jesus, Judas, either by accident or suicide, came to a ghastly and untimely end. Sceptical

writers have been prone to suggest that the Old Testament oracles gave incentive to the invention of many details; but reflection upon such correspondences induces us to believe that the actual occurrences recalled to men's minds literary and prophetic allusions. Thus the callous appeal to chance by the Roman soldiers in gambling for our Lord's tunic at the foot of the Cross, would remind subsequent writers of the words of the psalm, "They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots." Some of the supposed incidents may have arisen from symbolism afterwards used to set forth the consequences of Christ's sacrifice; but, while admitting such a possibility, we are far from feeling sure that they were not real occurrences. St. Mark affirms that at our Lord's death the thick, gorgeous veil of the temple, through which only the high-priest might pass once a year on the Day of Atonement, was rent from top to bottom. For the imagination of the Primitive Church, such a figure might naturally be used to illustrate the new access that Christ's death gave to man by removing all hindrances. St. Matthew describes the Death as accompanied by an earthquake, and asserts that the tombs were opened and that the dead returned as phantoms. Few today would boldly venture to say that such things could not happen, and many will admit a certain propriety in setting forth the mighty issues of our Lord's sacrifice in such legendary symbolism. If such fringes of the Passion narratives be treated as *Aberglaube*, still they serve to accentuate the feeling of wonder felt by the early Christians as they brooded over the mystery of the Cross.

12. In this study of the Crucifixion, our purpose has been severely historical and not doctrinal; but it seems natural that a few impressional reflections should follow. Jesus died. But we do not know all that death means; the outward visible signs mark a change in relationship, but they do not necessarily imply any destruction of the spiritual part. Our impressions of the Crucifixion will be determined largely by our conception of Christ's Personality. Jesus was a true Priest; He stood near to God and near to man; and all admit that He sustained unique relations with the Heavenly Father. His death, therefore, was not merely a memorable and isolated martyrdom, from which we deduce lessons of patience, obedience and piety; it was a great sacrifice made in the service of humanity. Jesus on the Cross ful-



filled the Greek ideal of some great compassionate Titan struggling against the inexorable tyranny of evil and wresting from the future some uplift for the race. As He approached His doom, Jesus said: "The prince of this world cometh and in Me he hath not anything." "His Death was the natural climax and crowning instance of the contradiction provoked by His inextinguishable zeal for righteousness."<sup>1</sup> It is recorded by St. Luke that, six weeks later, Simon Peter described Jesus as "being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and crucified and slain "by the hand of lawless men." With this view, however, must be joined St. John's persistent thought of Christ's voluntariness in death. He offered up Himself in obedience to the Divine appointment; He handed Himself over to His enemies. His Death was therefore "a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgement of God on the sin of man."<sup>2</sup> Instead of invoking legions of angels for His rescue, as He said He might have done, He subordinated the tragedy to His life-purpose and made Death a sacrifice for the race of which He remains the Spiritual head. By such autonomy in suffering He changed ignominy into exaltation, humiliation into glory. "The Lord reigned from the Tree." The self-immolation of our Lord removed the thick veils that had hidden God the Father, and raised men into a reconstituted Spiritual relationship. The touch of Death made sacred all that belonged to Him.

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, *The Humiliation*, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> M'Leod Campbell, *On the Nature of the Atonement*, p. 138.



## CHAPTER III

### JESUS RISES AND APPEARS

I. Books of ordinary biography conclude with the death scenes, and statements of posthumous influence; but St. Luke, having traced the account of Jesus from the miraculous birth to the Crucifixion and Resurrection, writes a sequel in which he describes his earlier treatise as simply relating "the things which Jesus began both to do and to teach until the day of His Assumption." In these words is implied the whole faith of the Apostolic Church. Death was not the end of Jesus; it constituted a new beginning of His wider Ministry. The presuppositions of Naturalism prevent belief in any work after death. From this point of view, the measure of emphasis upon the moral beauty of the life of Jesus is also the measure of His dismal and squalid failure. Such an estimate makes life, alike at its highest and its lowest, the play of grim necessity; it leaves no room for moral differences, there is neither good nor ill. But it is a matter of historic fact that death did not cause the cessation of Christ's activity; all the various and rich phenomena of the Christian religion sprang from the Cross and the Grave. "Whatever may have happened at the grave and in the matter of the appearances, one thing is certain: this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is life eternal."<sup>1</sup> So real are these post-Crucifixion activities of Christ that some who have found themselves unable to accept the Resurrection fact have joined with certain of the Gnostics and Mohammedans in denying that Jesus actually suffered death by crucifixion. The Moslem doctors assert that at the end some substitute took the place of Jesus and was crucified; while certain critics within Christendom have clutched at the imagined possibility that Jesus succumbed on the Cross to a profound swoon. But the true student of history is forced, sooner or later, to abandon such fanciful expedients and to admit the fact that

<sup>1</sup> A. Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 162.

Jesus suffered the bitter pangs of death—even the death of the Cross. St. Matthew relates that the Jewish authorities, having secured the Crucifixion, next obtained a guard for the grave. "Sir," they said to Pilate, "we have remembered that when this deceiver was alive, He said, 'After three days I rise again.' Give orders, then, to have the sepulchre secured until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He rose from the dead,' and so the last fraud will be worse than the first." Impatient at such relentless and pertinacious hate on the part of the high-priests and Pharisees, Pilate brusquely exclaimed, "Take a guard and begone! Secure it yourselves, as you know how." "So," says the Evangelist, "they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them." The failure of the disciples to understand their Lord's repeated predictions that He would rise again had not prevented vague rumours of these remarkable sayings from becoming known. But some critics have implied that, had there been a "watch" placed about the sealed grave, the pious women of the Gospels would hardly have expected to be allowed to open the tomb and embalm the body. Since, however, St. Matthew states that the precaution of a military guard was not petitioned until the day following the Crucifixion, the women may well have been ignorant of the fact that the authorities had made the grave inaccessible to them.

2. The historical certainty that Jesus died on the Cross and was buried cannot be shaken; yet this fact alone could never have proved the foundation of the Christian Religion; with it must be joined, in coequal assurance, the fact that there grew up, within a few short weeks at most, a belief that Jesus rose again from the tomb. Even scholars who were predisposed to reject the possibility of miracles, and are compelled by their philosophic premisses to disbelieve the Resurrection-fact, have been forced to admit the rise and spread of the Resurrection-faith, and also to acknowledge that this primitive faith alone accounts for the origin and power of the Christian Church. The problem confronting the critics is to account for the faith while they reject the fact. This Resurrection-faith created the Church; it gave to the apostles a victorious certainty in their work of propagating the Gospel: nay, it even gave the essential idea and kernel of their Gospel, and now forms the underlying assumption of the entire

New Testament. In the very earliest writing of the New Testament the Resurrection-faith is assumed to be coextensive with the Church: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose, so also will God bring with Him, through Jesus, those who have fallen asleep."<sup>1</sup> We do not exceed the range of literal veracity by affirming that the New Testament writers simply take it for granted that the bodily resurrection of Jesus constituted the foundation of all Christian doctrine; and yet it may be remarked upon as surprising that, while the apostles take the Resurrection-faith as the ground idea of the Gospel, they nowhere express any consciousness that it is necessary to prove that this miracle actually occurred. For them the Resurrection was already proved, and, instead of striving after further demonstration, they take the fact as itself the verifying evidence of their doctrine and purpose summed up in the Fourth Gospel, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."<sup>2</sup> The certainty of the Resurrection produced the Church, and the Church is the undying witness of the reality of the Faith. The belief that Jesus lives, acts continually as a renewing power upon Christian society. Bishop Westcott rightly affirmed, "It is not an accessory of the Apostolic message, but the message itself." The conception as expressed by the Evangelists and Apostles has itself the characteristics of a revelation." Further, "The Resurrection offers a new foundation for social union."<sup>3</sup>

Even Schmiedel admits, after enumerating some of the vital articles of Christianity, such as the doctrine that the death of Jesus has saving power; that Christ's supremacy over the Church is secure, and that all believers may look forward to the resurrection to a life of everlasting blessedness, that "if at any time it should come to be recognized that the Resurrection of Jesus never happened, the Christian faith with respect to all these points would come to an end."

3. As we have observed, the omission of all attempts at demonstrating historically the grounds for the belief in the Resurrection-fact only accentuates the naïve certainty of the Easter-faith; and we must now strive to appraise the true value of this apostolic conviction from the standpoint of history.

<sup>1</sup> Thess. iv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> John xxi. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, Intro. 52 and chap. iii., p. 1.

St. Paul is our earliest literary witness; his first authentic epistle carries the mind back within twenty years of the Crucifixion, and at that time he was able to assume the Resurrection of Jesus as a fact established beyond doubt in all Christian circles. Behind this apostolic literary testimony was the transmitted oral witness of those who knew Jesus intimately. All the recorded and implied circumstances show that there could have been no time for the gestation of a new myth; the faith arose immediately after Jesus had publicly died, and was avowed by the disciples, who had evinced no previous expectancy of His reappearance. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, gives a few slight autobiographical details of two visits to Jerusalem which he made, the second occurring fourteen years after the first. Since from Acts xv. we calculate that the second visit was made not later than A.D. 51, it may be inferred that about A.D. 37, or three years after his conversion, St. Paul spent fifteen days with Cephas at Jerusalem. "But," he writes, "no other of the apostles saw I except James the brother of the Lord." Then it was that this keen dialectician, who still astonishes men by the philosophic breadth and insight of his letters, inquired of the men who knew at first-hand concerning the historical appearances of the Risen Jesus, who had been revealed in himself within twelve or eighteen months of the Crucifixion. It has been remarked that St. Paul made no mention of the empty grave, and that his faith rested upon his own subjective vision of Jesus, and not upon the ground of a physical resurrection. But it is scarcely possible to give a fair interpretation to St. Paul's testimony, and not recognize that the emphasis falls upon the Resurrection-fact, and carries the implication that the Body of Jesus had actually been taken up and restored to the Spirit of a Victorious Christ. Further, we conjecture, without using the supposition as evidence, that so keen a man as this apostle would be eager to see the place where our Lord had lain. That apostle had not built his faith upon the sight of an empty tomb, but upon the spiritual experience he had received, that Christ was a living Person; and yet in his subsequent writings St. Paul implies his belief that the Body of Christ did not see corruption. Impartiality in this matter will perhaps be assured by the fact that today our faith in the Living Christ is not dependent upon the historical evidence of the physical resurrection. At the same time it does not seem that the faith can be reasonably accounted for apart from the fact; and the fact will



ever possess both an historical and a spiritual value for all who are able to admit it.

4. Although, as literary products, the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles belong to a later date than St. Paul's Epistles, yet the testimonies and beliefs embodied in them take us back to the actual occurrences of the Evangelic Ministry of Jesus. Whatever modifications had taken place in the processes of oral transmission, we do not believe that the remembrances of the first eye-witnesses were substantially altered. The defects and discrepancies of the Gospels lie on the surface; the authors were manifestly too ingenuous and honest to strive after any artificial harmony. And for this very reason their narratives yield fewer points of contact than we should wish. Strauss has ventured the serious indictment that "the various evangelical writers only agree as to a few of the appearances of Jesus after His Resurrection; the designation of the locality in one excludes the appearances narrated by the rest; the determination of time in another leaves no space for the narratives of his fellow-Evangelists; the enumeration of a third is given without any regard to the events reported by his predecessors; lastly, among several appearances recounted by various narrators, each claims to be the last, and yet has nothing in common with the others."<sup>1</sup> But this verdict, however honestly given, is as much due to the influence of the critic's presuppositions as it is grounded upon the data of the Gospels. The late Bishop Westcott affirmed that "the circumstances under which God is said to have given a revelation to men in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus were such as to make the special manifestation of power likely, or even natural; and the evidence by which the special Revelation is supported is such as would in any ordinary matter of life be amply sufficient to determine our action and belief." "It is not too much to say that there is no single historic incident better or more variously supported than the Resurrection of Christ."<sup>2</sup> Although few students would now echo such absolute dogmatic assurance,—so changed is the temper of the times,—yet neither would a balanced judgement swing to the other extreme position held by Strauss. Once again we may seek guidance between these irreconcilable dicta by recalling our impressions received from the totality of facts about

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, pt. iii., chap. iv., p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, chap. i., par. 63.



Jesus. If the evangelic testimonies about the Resurrection fall in harmoniously with the general plan of Christ's life which we have found in the course of this study, then we shall return to the New Testament witness of this supernatural event with a presumption in its favour. As we have followed the records of the evangelists, it has been borne in upon our minds that there was, in the life of Jesus, a very large element which must be characterized as supernatural. For ourselves, then, be it said, we start with no bias against the credibility of the Resurrection; and we do not demand impossibilities in the way of documentary evidence, but we are prepared to seek the underlying harmonies which no superficial disagreements can destroy. History knows no mathematical exactitude; it is the realm of probabilities: certitude arises, not simply from the absence of discrepancies, but from the cumulative weight of convergent testimony. But this attitude of judgement does not lead us to ascribe to the evangelists the critical acumen of scientific historians, for they shared the weaknesses and credulities of their age; yet their honesty of intention is too patent to be denied. We admit the embarrassment St. Matthew makes us feel by his exclusive record of Galilean appearances over against St. Luke's recital of Judæan manifestations. St. John, however, mediates between them by his story of the meeting between Jesus and the Seven Disciples by the Sea of Tiberius. In the authentic part of St. Mark, no post-Resurrection appearances are given; but the appendix enumerates Christophanies which are recorded by the other evangelists.

5. Ritschlian theologians strive to show that, even though the bodily resurrection be abandoned as a figment, still the spiritual value of this idea may be conserved in the experimental doctrine of Christ's continuing activity. However much of truth may inhere in this view, there still remains to be explained the disciples' unanimous belief that their Lord had risen. As Baur acknowledged, "In the faith of the disciples, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ came to be regarded as a solid and unquestionable fact. It was in this fact that Christianity acquired a firm basis for its historical development."<sup>1</sup> The uprising of this faith is a psychological phenomenon which is most naturally and rationally explained by the occurrence of the physical fact. We must guard against the subtle vice of scholars who impose modern refine-

<sup>1</sup> *The First Three Centuries* (Eng. trans.), p. 42.

ments of thought upon the primitive and naïve intelligence of the New Testament witnesses. In the minds of the disciples their strong, passionate belief in the Heavenly existence of Jesus was no deduction of reason drawn from a dogma of immortality; but it was a conviction forced upon them by mysterious reappearances of their Crucified Lord. There can be no doubt that they believed that Jesus had risen and revisited them; that He appeared to them individually and also when together, and even partook of material food with them. According to the earliest traditions, these appearances began on the third day after the Crucifixion and were repeated at intervals through the course of forty days, when they definitely ceased. The later vision granted to St. Paul may stand by itself in a separate category. A facile explanation assigns all these phenomena to hallucination and hysteria. Now while it would be easily credible that one or two persons might have been victims of hysterical imaginations, it is hard to believe that the various groups of disciples and friends should all have been dupes of their illusory fancies, and that these hallucinations should last just six weeks, and then cease altogether. There are no historical data for assuming that the disciples were predisposed to expect such reappearances; for they were disappointed, grieved and distracted by the tragedy of the Crucifixion. Strangely enough, while the high-priests and Pharisees are said to have recollected Christ's sayings about rising again, the disciples had so completely forgotten them that some critics have argued that Jesus never uttered such predictions. The disciples were not merely unexpectant; they seemed at first totally unready to believe that Jesus had risen; they actually doubted the first testimonies of their own companions: "for as yet, they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead."<sup>1</sup> No ancient oracles gave rise to the belief; the belief, however, became the occasion of subsequent recollections of Scripture prophecies. There is not an atom of evidence to show that any one of them was previously inclined to subjective visions; they were simply ashamed, terrified and crushed by the inexplicable tragedy of the Cross. Suddenly, a change came; from the depth of despair they were, one and all, transported into a mood of victorious certainty that Jesus had risen and was alive again. Then in the light of this faith, the Cross became transfigured and stood forth as the Divine Symbol of Love's Conquest. The uprising of this

<sup>1</sup> John xx. 8.

Resurrection-faith can be accounted for only by the acceptance of the sensuous perceptions of the appearances of the Risen Jesus. The inevitable conclusion of our review of the testimonies of the Gospels and of the antecedents of this new faith, is that the appearances were genuine manifestations made by Jesus to demonstrate to His disciples the reality of His Resurrection. The theory of subjective visions might have been accepted of St. Paul alone; yet even he, by his definite mention of "the third day," throws out a concrete detail which harmonizes more easily with an actual Resurrection-faith than with a visionary ideal. We accept Dr. Orr's verdict as characteristically sober and grounded upon the facts of the Gospels: "It will be fully recognized that . . . the narratives are fragmentary, condensed, often generalized, are different in points of view, difficult in some respects to fit into each other, yet generally, with patient inspection, furnishing a key to the solution of their own difficulties—receiving, also, no small elucidation from the better-ordered story of St. John."<sup>1</sup>

6. The Resurrection-faith upon which the Christian Church was founded, rested then upon the genuine appearances of the Living Lord; and, unless we rewrite the history of the Gospels, we must accept the connection of these appearances with the definite assertion that Jesus rose on "the third day," and that the tomb that morning was found to be empty. The swoon theory was shattered by Keim, so that it scarcely demands a passing allusion; but now suggestions come to us from psychical research that the phenomena of the appearances of the Risen Christ may have been given spiritually, even though His body remained in the grave. And this seems to many a veritable escape from all the questions of criticism and from all the inextricable confusions inherent in our Gospel narratives. The almost irreconcilable nature of the narratives of the Resurrection is a cause of stumbling for many. Up to the Crucifixion the Synoptists use a common tradition which can be traced like a thread of gold through all the minor differences. But in the accounts of the Resurrection the Evangelists agree in little else than the supreme and dominating belief that it really occurred. The Apostles seem never to have attempted to frame a harmonious narrative of this awe-inspiring event. Such an omission can only be ex-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Orr, in the *Expositor*, April, 1908, p. 352.

plained by the circumstance that they so lived under the immediate realization of the Resurrection-faith that the reality of the Fact appeared to them beyond disproof. Our point of view is different from theirs. "The failure of the oral tradition just where its testimony is most needful, is matter for profound regret; but it should be distinctly understood that, whatever it may mean, it does not mean that the Apostles knew nothing of the Resurrection, or had any doubt regarding it. On the contrary, they believed in it with exultant faith, and it was the burden of their preaching." Further, "when the Synoptists undertook the task of composing their Gospels, they laboured under this disadvantage, that the Apostles had dispersed in prosecution of their missions, and were inaccessible for enquiry and consultation. In the oral tradition they had, so far as it went, an amplitude of trustworthy material; but it stopped short at the Crucifixion, and for the episode of the Resurrection they had to be content with such information as they could glean among believers."<sup>1</sup> Such an admission as this from such a source may be used by some to depreciate the general evidence of the Resurrection, while increased emphasis may be placed on the reality of the appearances. The real understanding of history, however, depends less upon literal exactitude and verifiable chronology than upon a sympathetic response to the atmosphere and the persons of the period under investigation. According to the Synoptists, some devout and sorrowful women who loved Jesus went to the tomb, taking aromatics with them to embalm the body. When they reached the place, however, they found the body had disappeared; but angels (one or two) met them saying, "Why seek the living among the dead?" or, stating more affirmatively, "He is risen, He is not here." This message was carried by those women to Peter, and that disciple in company with John ran to the grave and saw that it was empty, and that the linen clothes were neatly folded. No evangelist describes the actual rising, but St. Matthew speaks of certain accompaniments. "And, behold! a great earthquake took place; for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and went and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white like snow; and for fear of him the watchers shook and became like dead men." This same evangelist also affirms that the guards were afterwards bribed by the Jews

<sup>1</sup> Rev. David Smith, *In the Days of His Flesh*, Intro. p. xxxiv.



to say that while they slept the disciples came and stole the body—a story, says St. Matthew, repeated “until this day.” Justin Martyr shows us that this rumour of the theft of the body by the disciples was circulated in his day.<sup>1</sup> Now although the Resurrection-faith rests upon the appearances rather than upon the scene of an empty tomb, yet we are persuaded that the tomb was empty; for, had the Body been in the grave, it would assuredly have been exhibited by the enemies of the new religion to disprove the apostolic message of the Resurrection. Unable to escape the conclusion that the grave must have been empty, some critics have suggested that though the disciples were incapable of fraud and long sustained deception, yet the Roman soldiers may have received orders to remove or destroy the corpse, and so prevent it from becoming an object of adoration. For such a supposition there is no tittle of evidence save the fact that the grave was empty.

7. It is hardly necessary in this prosaic attempt to state the natural impressions made by the Resurrection narratives of the Gospel, to make more than reference to the rise of a school of mythical criticism, the scholars of which treat the New Testament stories as though they were simply derived from Babylonian mythology. In the hands of these mythologists the firm ground of history sinks away, and the records are evaporated into airy dreams and legends of the protean sun-god Marduk. Whatever influence upon the Gospels may have been exerted by an oriental syncretism in general, and by the Gilgamish epic in particular—and we are not prepared to deny traces of such influence—still, we contend that the concrete evidence of the Apostle Paul and the sober testimonies found in the Gospels cannot be so easily sublimated into vaporous forms of the sun-myth. The remarkable thing is that, although fully conscious of the labyrinthine confusions in the Gospel narratives, they yet make upon our minds the impression that they rest upon a real ground of history. The New Testament represents, with substantial correctness, what was believed by the Apostles themselves to have been the circumstances and facts of the origination of the Church; and it is not easy for us to suppose that the men who proved themselves to be genuine leaders of the New Religion were utterly ignorant of the facts that supplied them with motives and dy-

<sup>1</sup> *Dial. w. Trypho*, 108.



namic. Fascinating though these mythological explanations prove for the minds of many learned men who seem to us to be pixieled, we return to the soberer judgement stated lucidly by Dr. Swete, "The evidence is perplexing, not overwhelming, and it is certainly far from being complete; in some of the details it may be inexact. But the main fact that the Lord rose again on the third day has not been shaken by any argument hitherto adduced. The intellectual difficulty of believing the Resurrection of our Lord's body to be a baseless story will always be greater than the intellectual difficulty of believing it to be a substantial fact."<sup>1</sup>

8. It is not necessary to construct any scheme for the harmonization of the familiar stories of Christ's post-Resurrection appearances; the barest enumeration of them, in the order which appears to us most probable but by no means certain, will suffice to recall the impressions which they have made upon our minds. The first was to Mary Magdalene, the second to the other women an hour or two later. The relation of these to one another is far from clear; some readers incline to treat the second as a generalized account of the first, while others place it before the pathetic story of the Lord's self-disclosure to Mary. Next came the appearance to Peter in a private and unrecorded interview mentioned by St. Paul and St. Luke. The third evangelist gives the beautiful and instructive account of our Lord's meeting and converse with the two disciples, Cleopas and another, on the road to Emmaus; and a confirmation of this is found in the appendix to St. Mark. The fifth and last appearance on the Resurrection Day was given to the assembled disciples at Jerusalem when Thomas was absent. St. John relates the next disclosure eight days after, which led to the wonderful confession of faith by the disciple who had doubted, and, further, the exquisite narrative of the meeting of Jesus with the Seven Fishermen at the Lake side, and the subsequent restoration of Simon in the threefold confession of love. St. Paul writes of the Risen Christ having been seen by over five hundred brethren at once, the greater number of whom remained alive when he wrote to the Corinthians—an occasion probably identical with that related by St. Matthew as having been appointed to take place in Galilee. The great commission which St. Matthew states was given on that occasion may have really been spoken later on the Mount of Olives.

<sup>1</sup>H. B. Swete, *Expos. Times*, Feb. 1903, p. 214.

"Then," says St. Paul, "He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and, last of all, as unto one born out of due time, He appeared unto me also." The final appearance to the Eleven, mentioned as we have stated by St. Paul, as also by St. Luke, and in the appendix to St. Mark, was on the Mount of Olives, where the Risen Lord is recorded to have pronounced His august claim, and to have given the disciples their world-wide commission:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and upon earth:  
Go then and make disciples of all nations,  
Baptize them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy  
Spirit;  
Teach them to observe all that ever I commanded you:  
And lo, I Myself am with you all the days until the close of the age!"

With that commission may have been joined the promise of spiritual equipment: "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." St. Luke sums up these Christophanies with characteristic simplicity: Jesus "shewed Himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God."

9. The Gospel records of the post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus suggest that the Body had not simply been reanimated, but that it had been subjected to some marvellous transformation, and henceforth possessed attributes which made it altogether responsive to His Spiritual Will. It may be that during those forty days our Lord Himself was passing through some process of glorification, the consummation of which was marked by the Ascension. Another motive for this delay of the final act of the Analepsis was the purpose of Jesus to present Himself to His disciples at stated intervals, so that they might be fully convinced of His Resurrection, and yet at the same time disciplined into an abiding consciousness of His Presence when unseen. The handful of dust which constituted the material of His Body had taken on new attributes and potencies, and was made perfectly subservient to the Spirit, appearing and disappearing, materializing and dissolving at the behests of His loving Will. When He chose that body became visible and tangible, and was seen to bear the marks of the nails, and with it He ate and drank

with His disciples; on the other hand, at any moment He could vanish without the opening of doors, or the eyes of His companions might be "holden" that they did not recognize Him. In these appearances we discern the prophetic reconciliation between Spirit and Matter which must surely constitute the goal of human redemption. Men have learned too well the limitations of their knowledge to venture any dogmas concerning the nature of matter; we can only surmise that it is the product of Spirit, and has been constituted the medium of spiritual operations and of earthly fellowship. Some of its marvellous potencies are revealed as it yields to the moulding and mastery of life. In taking up the body once again, Jesus assumed no more a corruptible organism; He transfigured it with Spiritual force, and made it the instrument of His deathless passion to execute the Will of the Father. It had been sown in weakness and was raised in power; sown a natural body, it had been raised a spiritual body. Some such miracle as this was needed to demonstrate the absolute conquest of Spiritual Life over death. Those brief interviews between the Risen Jesus and the disciples impressed upon the minds of the latter the reality of their Lord's continuing life, and communicated to them also a sense of His transcendent dignity; the old familiarity passes away, but with the growth of deeper reverence there remained and grew a reciprocal love.

10. Although it does not come within the scope of our purpose to deduce the doctrinal implications of the Resurrection of Jesus, at least we may legitimately indicate some of its effects upon men's conception of the meaning of all the steps which led up to it in the preparatory ministry. The Resurrection is the crown of the Incarnation; and, viewed from this elevation, the whole life is seen afresh to be charged with Divine Revelation. It affects the retrospect of the earthly ministry quite as much as the subsequent history of His Church. From this standpoint, the whole life of Jesus is perceived to be governed by God's gracious world-purpose. Just as, in the development of an organism, a stage is reached at last when a higher principle of life reacts upon the accumulated results of the previous processes, thereby lifting the creature to a higher plane whence may be unfolded new potentialities, so in the Resurrection we meet with a new transforming energy which imposes an enlarged and glorious

interpretation upon all the steps and incidents which led up to such a consummation. The Resurrection set the disciples in a new relation to the facts of the Ministry of Jesus, so that they became growingly intelligent of the implications and issues of His life, and they became empowered to appropriate and apply the whole body of Truth communicated by Him and in Him. Their entrance into light came through the Resurrection-faith and Spiritual baptism; they became possessors of the Living Spirit of Christ and so were guided into an ever enlarging heritage of truth. From that memorable third day, there dawned upon them the faith in the Heavenly Messiahship of the Christ, and they came to acknowledge Him as the universal Lord. The very Cross was bathed in the splendour of this light, so that the apostles declared that Jesus died for our sins and was raised for our justification. If Jesus were not risen, the Ministry of Jesus would have been simply another enigma added to the mystery of man's struggle against destiny. Apart from the Resurrection, Jesus is the riddle of the world: contemplating Him, some will judge Him to be our noblest Teacher; others will deem Him, if not the arch-blasphemer, then the most pitiable of self-deluded egoists. The Resurrection changes everything: it is a Pisgah-height, where the atmosphere is translucent, and whence the vision is clarified; and, looking from this coign of vantage, we trace even through the Humiliation the Revelation of God and Eternal Life. The Divine has been translated for us into the terms of our humanity. The Resurrection is the historic declaration of God's reconciliation with man; it is an event which lifts man above the realm of evanescent phenomena into the sphere of Spiritual and eternal relationships. The Resurrection symbolizes, as nothing else can, the conquest of the Soul over Sin and death; and, without this grand dénouement, God's revelations would all seem imperfect. The history of the strong Son of God, from the Cradle to the Cross, from the Crucifixion to the Ascension, constitutes a ground of spiritual hope for all mankind; it demonstrates the action of God on man's behalf, and reveals, in gracious light, the motive and goal of our creation.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REGNANT BUT VEILED CHRIST

I. WE have now reached a point in our study of the Ministry of Jesus similar to that arrived at by the Apostles after the Ascension. Those ten days must have been filled with recollections, reflections and inferences. Their certainty concerning the Resurrection materially affected all their remembrances of Jesus. Hitherto they have looked upon the Ministry of Jesus in a broken and sectional manner, finding in the current events much that was strange and inexplicable. They had seen successive incidents, various phases, and it had seemed to them that the Master's life was full of darkness as well as light, of gracious harmonies and partial dissonances, of self-conscious power and singular weaknesses; but now they reached the summit of Olivet and saw that ministry steadily and saw it whole. They recalled the large, pure utterances of the Teacher, and all the parts grew into an impressive unity, charged with the conviction and authority of the Personal force of Jesus. They remembered His acts, and now all appeared so beautifully simple and so grandly harmonious with the impression He had made upon them. Scenes of suffering undeserved, of apparent failures, of agony pathetically confessed, of triumphant hopes and predictions of victorious issues, all came back to memory, and were now reflected upon *sub specie æternitatis*; and thus they began to discern that God had been working in and through their Master's life as well as man. Perhaps some great luminous words of Jesus spoken during the forty days had aided them in seeing that His life-work not only constituted a unity in itself, but also formed an integral part of the single, all-embracing purpose of God in our world.

“This sequence of the soul's achievements here,  
Being, as I find much reason to conceive,  
Intended to be viewed eventually  
As a great whole, not analyzed to parts,  
But each part having reference to all.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Browning, *Cleon*.



That this unity had not been destroyed by death had been demonstrated by post-Resurrection appearances which had produced in the apostles' minds an absolute certitude which made them ready and glad to die rather than cease to bear witness for Christ Jesus. Throughout their experiences during the past forty days, it seemed to them that the Risen Lord had designed to impress upon their minds the fact of His continuing Messianic ministry and abiding Spiritual Presence. "When we consider this we shall, in regard to the utterances in which He promises to return to His disciples and be seen by them after a short period of separation, be forced to the explanation that He thought of such a permanent Spiritual reunion with His disciples as would make Him in their consciousness living in spite of His death, and near in spite of earthly separation. . . . Yet, on the other hand, Jesus did not think of a merely subjective inward idea of the disciples as had no corresponding reality; but He was certain that as exalted to the Heavenly life with God, He would stand in real fellowship with His disciples, who would be inwardly joyful; therefore His saying that they would see Him corresponds to the other saying that He would Himself come to them and would see them."<sup>1</sup> The Resurrection and the Ascension recalled such predictions to their minds and verified them in experience. Such supernatural culmination of His ministry placed it beyond doubt that death could not dissolve the unity of His Person, nor terminate His spiritual ministry in the community of God and mankind. In saying that we had reached a like stage of thought—of recollection, reflection and inference—as the disciples, waiting in Jerusalem between the Ascension and the day of complete Spiritual Baptism, we mean that the study of the Ministry of Jesus has produced in our minds the conviction that He is the abiding Factor in our world's history.

2. The disciples became possessed and were dominated by the Spirit of the living Christ. One of the objects of the post-Resurrection Christophanies was to open their understandings; the Risen Jesus communicated to them anticipations of the Pentecost: "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." As we have seen, the appearances are imbedded too centrally in the Gospels to be eliminated, and the

<sup>1</sup> Wendt, *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 296-298.

records suggest that our Lord presented Himself to the assembled disciples on the successive Sundays between the Crucifixion and the Ascension, and so caused the substitution of the first day of the week for the Jewish Sabbath throughout the Christian Church. We also find presumptive evidence for a belief that our Lord's instructions during those days really constituted the foundation of the subsequent teachings of the Apostles.<sup>1</sup> The doctrines attributed to Peter and Paul in the Acts of the Apostles become explicable when we recall St. Luke's affirmation that before He ascended, the Risen Jesus explained to His disciples that the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms had shadowed forth the eternal counsel of God and had adumbrated His own Life, Death and Resurrection. Such a belief should not be used to fix upon the Old Testament interpretations which literary and historical criticism must reject; for, since the Hebrew Scriptures are as full of the *Humanities* as the literature of Greece, it is but natural to find in them prefigurings and types of the one perfect Ideal realized in history by our Lord. "The burden of the Old Testament is just that relationship of the personal Spirit of man to the personal Spirit of God which first finds its complete expression in Jesus Christ, and finds it in Him through the act and experience of what we call the Cross."<sup>2</sup> They became possessed of the mind of Christ, and under the guidance of His Spirit, the Paraclete and Truth-witnesser, the disciples not only regained a vivid remembrance of all the Master's teachings prior to His death, but they were led to treat His ministry, His Passion, Death and Resurrection as their simple creed of fact, in which was expressed the very heart of God's purpose in our world. "The Teaching of the Apostles was founded on what was to their minds the concrete presentation of essential truth, the life, death and Resurrection of our Lord, and the light thence cast on God's eternal counsel and His plans of dealing with men. As occasion required, they were led to draw forth various inferences: but the truth itself they recognized as subsisting in that primitive condensation of the historical Gospel."<sup>3</sup> While giving full acknowledgement of the momentous and epoch-making event of the Pentecost, we attribute to the preceding fifty days the significance of a birth-time; for during that brief interval

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 22-36.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Du Bose, *The Gospel acc. to St. Paul*, p. 22f.

<sup>3</sup> Hort, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, p. 63.

were originated and germinally flung forth all the essential doctrines of the Apostolic Church. Then it was that the society of Jesus, which had been temporarily shattered by the tragedy of the Crucifixion, was reconstructed and quickened into organic self-consciousness and purpose. The appearances and instructions of those days were not vague and ineffectual—during that brief period the Risen Lord fused His disciples into a community—not, indeed, into a hard and fast organization, but still into a conscious fellowship; He also gave them a fresh understanding of the Divine Revelation which had received a culminating expression in His own history; and He infused into their souls something of the spiritual force of His own personal experience.

3. No little prejudice has been shown against the belief that Jesus designed the organization of His disciples into a church. Such a community, “externally bounded and inwardly articulated,” says Wendt, “was not contemplated and predetermined by Jesus.” But if the Resurrection-faith were grounded in the genuine appearances of Jesus, it may be easily conceived that the Risen Lord should have given some explicit utterance to His world-wide purpose. The various reports of the great missionary commission may be accounted for by the modifying influence of oral transmission, although our Lord Himself may have reiterated His great command upon several occasions with natural variations. Harmonious with this supposition is the Johannine record of the interview with the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, when, seeing them drawn back into their old familiar occupation and habits, the Risen Jesus definitely commissioned Simon with the Shepherd’s task; for He did not intend them to fall back into the conventional ways of ordinary men—they were to be His ambassadors. Strauss expressed the natural objection against the apostolic missionary commission when he said the formula “sounds so exactly as if it had been borrowed from the ecclesiastical ritual that there is no slight probability in the supposition that it was transferred from thence to the mouth of Jesus.” The very differences and difficulties inherent in the records of such a commission make it appear most plausible that it originated in the Church’s subsequent consciousness of Christ’s world-embracing work; and a further temptation to adopt this facile means of escape from difficulty arises from an

apparent contradiction between such universalism and the Judaistic limitations of the first apostolic propaganda. A little reflection, however, assures us that behind the nationalism of the first Petrine conception of the Gospel lay the universal ideal of Jesus. The implications of a world-wide faith lay in all the great characteristic utterances of Jesus. And even were it generally admitted that this grand missionary commission articulated the logic of events in the consciousness of the Church, still the problem remains to account for the rise of this sublime faith in Christ's abiding relation to the Church and the world. Unless we resort to subterfuge and evasion, we are compelled to postulate the existence of some great creative genius at the beginning of the Christian Church, that was at once able to produce a universal faith, and to inspire commonplace men with a moral dynamic which should draw their lives into some correspondence with the lofty ideals they proclaimed. Once admit the fact of the Resurrection and subsequent appearances, and it is easily credible that our Lord Himself organized His disciples into a community, and breathed into them this consciousness of His world-purpose. It is easy to imagine that after their first glimpse of this tremendous destiny the disciples may have been sucked back into a lower Judaistic phase and movement of Christian thought, and that this temporary recession may have been ultimately counteracted by the inherent power of the Christ-ideal and Spirit which had taken possession of their souls. Much of the criticism of the Missionary Commission and other parts of the Gospels really springs from an invincible repugnance to miracles. The very existence of a supernatural power at work in the world is prohibited by presuppositions which find no avowal by most scholars, but which were boldly articulated by Strauss. "The totality of finite things forms a vast circle, which except that it owes its existence and laws to a superior power, suffers no intrusion from without. This conviction is so much a habit of thought with the modern world, that in actual life the belief in a supernatural manifestation, an immediate agency, is at once attributed to ignorance and imposture."<sup>1</sup>

4. We have the great apostolic charter and the general statement that the Lord opened the Scriptures to their understandings; but besides this one wonders if any rays of the post-

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, p. 78. ..



Resurrection teaching may not be found reflected back upon the records of Christ's earlier ministry. For instance, Professor Briggs has boldly conjectured that the mystical discourse on eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus may belong to this period of the appearances.<sup>1</sup> And the same scholar makes a suggestion which is not discordant with the tenor of the intercessory prayer that parts of it may have been uttered during this epoch-making interval. Certainly our Lord speaks as though the work given Him to do by the Father has already been accomplished; the "humiliation" is thought of as ended; the curriculum of suffering and temptation lies behind; and even the ministry of training the disciples appears in a retrospective light, and the Master says, "While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me: yea, I guarded them, nor did one of them perish except the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled." The hypothesis that this prayer is a sublime creation of the evangelist in his romance of the Incarnate Logos, does away at a stroke with all difficulties of chronology; but, if retained as historical, there are utterances in it which might have been fitly spoken after the Crucifixion. The whole prayer hinges on the apostolic commission, "as Thou didst send Me into the world, I also sent them into the world." His own apostolate has become the pattern of theirs; His equipment is to be shared also, and as He had been sanctified by His intuitions into God's truth, will and glory, so henceforth must they be hallowed in a like manner. Such a prayer might have been uttered by the lakeside when, seeing how the disciples shrank from the vaster obligations of their new apostolate, the Risen Lord reclaimed them to larger duties and gave them reassurance of adequate equipment. He was filled with infinite longings for the realization of His Father's glory in the world, and it is far from improbable that He gave utterance to His passionate desires for the sanctification and union of His disciples, and for the saving of the world through them.

5. The third evangelist supplements the final commission by a definition of the evangelic message as one of repentance and of remission of sins, and also by a promise of power. "Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."

<sup>1</sup> *New Light*, etc., p. 122f.



Whether we accept this Lucan alternative to Matthæan assurance of His abiding presence, or not, the subsequent work of the Apostles can be explained only as the realization of both the presence and dynamic of the Risen Christ. Behind those lowly men of Galilee stands the Christ clothed in the transcendent glory of the Resurrection and equipped with all power. Imperfectly educated as they were, and wholly lacking in social status and wealth, some personal force was impelling these men into unknown ways of toil and experience of ultimate victory. Even if we accepted the supposition that the Primitive Church originated its own consciousness of this world-wide mission which the evangelists have rendered with such regal eloquence, the problem would still remain to be faced, how men lacking all the elements of intellectual and social prestige could have been lifted to this exalted plane of thought and action. The most credible solution of the problem is assuredly the acceptance of the tradition of the Gospels that Jesus rose from the dead and presented Himself to His disciples at several different times, and having instructed them in the mysteries of His life, Passion and Resurrection, finally expressed His exultant consciousness of sovereignty and power in the charge that they should go forth and win the whole world into allegiance unto Himself.

6. The first step in the transcendent process of the Divine Incarnation involved a self-emptying, or *Kenosis*; and the last historic scene may be translated as the *Anaplerosis*—the assumption into glory. In the language of many scholars one is conscious of a vague feeling of uncertainty about the Ascension scene. There is a tendency to merge the Resurrection and Ascension together. St. Paul shows no consciousness of any historic event dividing the appearances to the disciples from the vision he received of the glorified Lord. A hint seems to be given in the words spoken to Mary at the sepulchre in His prohibition against touching His Person because He was “not yet ascended”—a prohibition that was removed eight days later, when He invited the doubting Thomas to touch the uneradicated stigmata in His hands and side. Some readers infer from the Third Gospel that its author believed that the appearances and the Ascension all took place on the Resurrection-day, and that the reference in the Acts of the Apostles to the “forty days” signifies, in round numbers, the duration of the time of subsequent

Christophanies which were brought to a termination by the Pentecost. Dr. Bernhard Weiss says: "By His Resurrection, Jesus, it is true, does not understand a resuscitation to earthly life; but an exaltation to a state of existence which is raised above the conditions of earthly life; but this exaltation is always conceived of as a resurrection, i.e. as a restoration of His corporeity, although in a form which is in keeping with the Heavenly life. . . . Neither in the prophecy of Jesus nor in the earliest tradition is the Ascension to Heaven conceived of as an epoch-making event, so far was the latter from representing it as an occurrence which was perceptible to the senses. The Resurrection (rightly understood) qualifies Him of itself, for the heavenly life."<sup>1</sup> Westcott and Hort gave the judgement that "the Ascension apparently did not lie within the proper scope of the Gospels, as seen in their genuine texts; its true place was at the head of the Acts of the Apostles, as the preparation for the day of Pentecost, and thus the beginning of the history of the Church."<sup>2</sup> It is admittedly possible that, in the account of a visible Ascension, there may have been precipitated the apostolic assurance of the exaltation of their Lord. Such a tradition clothes the revelation of the Glorified Lord in the forms of time and space, and its value may lie in its Spiritual interpretation. On the other hand, attempts to throw ridicule upon the story as contrary to modern astronomic conceptions seem to us unworthy of sober criticism. In favour of the historicity of the tradition, it may be noted that there is an inherent fitness in the solemn passing of the Lord within the veil, which signalized not only the withdrawal of all tokens of His corporeal Presence, but the more positive faith that henceforth He would act as the invisible King-Priest of humanity within the realm of spiritual relationships. The disciples' question, "Lord, is this the time when Thou art to restore the royal power to Israel?" which to us seems so unseasonable, with its savour of the old Jewish Messianism, lends a touch of historical reality to the strange scene. The narrative is characterized by a gracious dignity and restraint, and stands free of the usual accretions of legendary growths. The appearances of the Risen

<sup>1</sup> Bernhard Weiss, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, vol. i., p. 90, note.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott and Hort, *Notes on Select Readings*, Luke xxiv. 51. (*καὶ ἀνεβέητο εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν*) "Text was evidently inserted from an assumption that a separation from the disciples at the close of the Gospel must be the Ascension."

Lord suddenly ceased, leaving no expectancy of any further Christophanies until He should appear as the angels announced in the final *parousia*. At least there is, in the evangelic narrative, no incongruity with our highest impression of the completely spiritualized nature of the Risen Lord; and when we face the difficulty of finding any mind in the Primitive Church capable of such marvellous invention, a strong presumption arises that St. Luke has correctly delineated the final interview between Jesus and His disciples.

7. As previously pointed out, the Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension are all steps in one process covered by St. Luke's phrase, "In the days of His *Analepsis*." "The death," says Dr. Hort, "belongs to both periods. It is the lowest point of the descent; the testimony sealed in blood, the obedience perfected in sacrifice. But it is also the beginning of the Ascent. The Cross is already a lifting up out of the earth, a prophecy of the lifting up into the heavens. God accepts the sacrifice, raises His Son from the dead as by a second birth, and exalts Him to sit at His own Right Hand till He has put His enemies under His feet."<sup>1</sup> The Ascension completed the Resurrection; it was the symbolic demonstration of the Father's approval of His Son's work in the world, and it became a gracious prophecy of the ultimate destiny of the race into which Christ had entered. The records of His earthly Ministry, although of higher spiritual value for mankind than all the discoveries of science and philosophy, are sealed by the Ascension as only the prelude to the Messianic, high-priestly work of our Lord which will continue until the end of the age. The tragedy of Calvary could not be obliterated from memory; but henceforth it was transfused with Divine and glorious meanings. The idea was stamped upon the Church that, while our Lord would no more dwell among them in the flesh, He would come again in Spirit, and, although hidden from the world, He would be verifiably present in the minds of His followers. The Holy Spirit which came upon them in power was the Spirit of Christ, by whose operation the facts of the previous ministry were recalled and reproduced in the experiences of those who acknowledged Him to be the Lord. "After going up on high, He led captives captive; He gave gifts to men. Now what does the word *He went up* mean,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hort, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, p. 151.

except this: that He also descended into the lower regions of the earth? He who descended is the same as He who *went up* high above all heavens, that He might fill all things." The Christian religion is not constituted by a set of abstract beliefs, nor even by memories of the historic life of Jesus, valuable as these will ever be for our instruction, but by the continued activity of the Spirit of Christ in every age. Imperfect though our outward and visible organizations may be, they are still the instruments through which the Immanent Christ continues His Ministry in the world. The internecine conflicts, jealousies and schisms of the Christian Church are the results of inadequate apprehensions of Christ's Spirit, and they have obstructed the outflow of the power of the exalted Lord; and yet so mighty are the workings of this indwelling Spirit-Presence, these very barriers have been made to contribute toward the fuller explication of His manifoldness.

8. In treating of the continuing ministry of our Lord, immanence ought never to be torn apart from the antithetic term of His transcendence. The eloquent writer to the Hebrews conceived the earthly experiences of Jesus to be a discipline, education and purification of the perfected Priest of Humanity; having prepared for His unique Ministry, He offered up Himself as a sacrifice; then He was raised from the dead and exalted to a state of Divine honour, and sat down at the Right Hand of the Sovereignty on High. The work of Jesus was not evanescent, nor could it be comprised within the little span of His earthly course: it is still going on, perpetuated by His transcendent glory in the Heavens, and made effectual on earth by His immanence in the Church; and, according to the New Testament, it will be finally consummated in a glorious *parousia* when He shall be acknowledged by all to be the King. The Resurrection and Ascension are God's acknowledgement of the Son, and historically signalize His assumption of the prerogatives and powers of His Messianic reign. So remarkable was the impression made by the workings of the Christ, that rigorous monotheist though he was, St. Paul within twenty years of the Crucifixion naïvely coördinated His Name with the Father's; and moreover, in so doing the Apostle but represented "the common teaching of all Christians." The centre of gravity for His Kingdom is not in the past or present, but in the future: we are drawn into



movements which have their goal in a promised *parousia*, and all of us are controlled, consciously or unconsciously, by an ideal which is as yet only partially realized. The facts of Christian history are self-attesting, substantiating to our reason the reality of the Easter-faith. The teachings of the Apostles and Evangelists, by prevailing over the common instincts of the flesh, show the power of Christ's veiled regnancy; while the recorded words attributed to the Risen Lord and the common hopes of the Apostles lead the mind to cherish an expectation of some consummation, some epochal demonstration of completed triumph. The study of the Historic Christ passes naturally into spiritual philosophy; our intellectual quest becomes experimental religion. The Jesus of the Gospels attests His reality to modern faith. Historical enquiry deepens the conviction of genuineness in the recorded facts out of which Christianity has evolved. Naturalistic bias gives way before the clarified vision of the Man of Nazareth. The Person of Jesus is the best guarantee of the good faith of the Evangelists. Behind the literature of the New Testament stands the indestructible Figure of the Man. The Gospels can only be explained through the facts, and the facts are credible in their relation to Jesus Christ. With equal intensity Modern Faith holds to the reality of His Humanity and to the authority of the Divine Revelation in Him. The naïve Faith of the Apostles contained the germ of our most enlightened philosophy. The Risen Jesus has dominated nineteen centuries of history among the most intellectual and progressive races of the West. Today He is challenging the East by His undiminished claims. Influences of spiritual power proceed from Him perennially, and His continuing, mediatorial ministry results in the gradual uplifting of mankind. Jesus has become the Objective Conscience of our race: His Gospel is the inexhaustible fount of spiritual inspiration: His Divine Kingdom is the norm of a universal community: love of Him is constituting a bond of human brotherhood and is the directive force of all that is noblest and best in the world; while faith in His Divine-Human Person is the secret of a virile and exalted theism. This faith may be summed up in the threefold formula: Christ has come: He is daily coming in spiritual power; and He will come to bring humanity to its goal.

THE END





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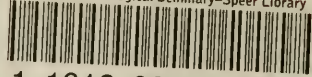
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